

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE — COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENTS SUMMIT

**860. Ms E. EVANGEL to the Minister for Police:**

Can the minister please tell the house about her attendance at the Council of Australian Governments' domestic violence summit?

**Ms M.M. Quirk** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Girrawheen!

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY replied:**

This is how the opposition reacts to a question on family violence. Members opposite interject before I can even get a sentence out. The member for Girrawheen has no credibility.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Girrawheen, you have been called twice. I want an answer through the Chair.

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I was very pleased to represent the state government in Brisbane at a COAG family violence summit. Ministers and Premiers from every state were there to present to 190 delegates, including the Prime Minister, on parts of our family violence strategies that could be of benefit and that fitted in with the national Australian strategy for reducing violence in our community, particularly family violence.

**Ms M.M. Quirk** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Girrawheen!

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** With the help of the Minister for Child Protection, who assisted me in putting together some of the policies that she has carriage of, I presented the Safer Families, Safer Communities Kimberley Family Violence Regional Plan 2015–2020.

**Dr A.D. Buti** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Armadale!

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** Members will be interested to know that colleagues from the east coast were quite astonished when they were presented with the task and challenge we have in trying to manage family violence in a geographical location such as the Kimberley. It covers 423 000 square kilometres, about 180 or so communities, and six towns. In fact, when I put it to my colleagues on the east coast that the Kimberley—this is just one region—is twice the size of Victoria and 71 times the size of Brisbane, the city in which we were presenting our policies, there was a lot of interest on behalf of the Prime Minister and other states in the family violence regional plan, particularly our approach of engaging with the communities and the work we are doing at present to link all our existing services to provide an integrated, culturally appropriate response to family violence. We have improved our responses to victims and to perpetrators and we are working on establishing a better data baseline so we can monitor and evaluate the work we are undertaking.

Some of our significant improvements have been made by better screening and assessment and referral forms for victims of domestic violence. We have engaged additional crisis accommodation services and additional services for victims. Kimberley district police have been working very hard on improving their responses to attendances. They are gathering a lot of available evidence for issues such as violence restraining order breaches and violent behaviour, regardless of whether a victim wants to press ahead with charges, which is important when there is a lot of cultural and family pressure on individuals who are victims of violence. Forums have been held with local magistrates, all our service providers and police—all the people on the ground—regarding the use of VROs in the region to make sure victims and offenders understand what a violence restraining order means, that they can be varied and do not necessarily need to be cancelled if the conditions are not workable, and those sorts of things. We will continue with that work. It is a challenging environment but we have very engaged, enthusiastic and passionate people on the ground who are working with government across multiple agencies to ensure our response to family violence in the Kimberley improves. It will take us some time to get it to the level we need, but we already have a significantly improved service out of our inquiry into family violence and out of the development of our strategy.