

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

852. Dr A.D. BUTI to the Minister for Police:

I refer the minister to her comments in December 2013 regarding the policing model for domestic violence, when the minister said, and I quote —

We will not hang onto a model that is not working ... We will take courageous steps around dealing with domestic violence. If this model does not work, we will change the model, and we will continue to change the model until we drive down the incidence of domestic violence.

Why, despite the fact that the minister has narrowed the range of relationships under the definition of domestic and family violence, has there been an increase of 1 383 domestic assaults between 2013–14 and 2014–15?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY replied:

I thank the member for the question. I think members might recall from when I was answering the member for Fremantle's question that we changed the way that we respond and record domestic violence incidences in the 2012–13 year. That was about ensuring that police generated an incident report for domestic violence incidences that they attended, which was not always the case.

Point of Order

Dr A.D. BUTI: This is the assaults. On a point of relevance —

Mr C.J. Barnett: On your irrelevance!

Dr A.D. BUTI: The Premier would know nothing about domestic violence.

The SPEAKER: Do you have a point of order?

Dr A.D. BUTI: A point of order; sorry.

Minister, I am not talking about incidences. I am talking about domestic assaults—the actual assaults. This has nothing to do with incident reports.

The SPEAKER: Thank you. Minister, you can digest that one and carry on.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Mr Speaker —

Mr W.J. Johnston interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Cannington!

Mr W.J. Johnston interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Cannington, I call you to order for the second time.

A member: Look at him!

The SPEAKER: I do not want to look at anybody. I am listening to the minister. I want a quick answer, minister. Thank you.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: There are a couple of ways that we record domestic violence. People will call for attendance by police, and there is a computer-aided dispatch report generated and there will be an incident report generated, and then —

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Armadale!

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Can I finish my sentence, member for Armadale? I am a bit tired of the member for Armadale yelling at me when I am in the middle of a sentence.

Mr P.B. Watson interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Albany, I call you to order for the second time.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: As I was saying, after an incident has been recorded and police have responded, it may then progress to a charge being laid. An increase in the number of charges being laid, while alarming, is not necessarily always bad news, because it means that police are taking domestic violence seriously and are actually laying charges appropriately against the perpetrators of domestic violence. I think that is an improvement in the way that police do business, notwithstanding the fact that we need to drive down the incidences of domestic violence in the community. All violence against women and children is unacceptable, and violence against men, who are sometimes caught up in domestic violence scenarios, is also unacceptable.

What we have done in the metropolitan area is that each district now has a victim support unit. That victim support unit manages the police response, and the consequential follow-up of those family and domestic violence specialists. They are co-housed with the Department for Child Protection and Family Support services so that we have specialist child protection and domestic violence counsellors available to try to interrogate and unravel the incredibly complex scenarios that sometimes occur in the family and domestic violence space. We are also part of the COAG national priority response to domestic violence. The Victorian royal commission into family and domestic violence, which is looking at the best ways to reduce domestic violence in the Australian community, led by Justice Marcia Neave, is also in train. We are keeping a close watch on that. There is a national plan to reduce violence against women and their children. We are part of that. The state has launched its strategy to reduce the incidence of domestic violence and improve our response, which my colleague in the other place, Hon Helen Morton, is also part of. We are taking it seriously. We are training more officers to respond to this. We have our district response teams co-located with specialist officers to help assist in these scenarios. We take it seriously, we intend to drive it down, and we will not rest until we have started to drive down the incidence of family and domestic violence.