

INDIGENOUS INCARCERATION RATES

**579. MR N.W. MORTON to the Minister for Police:**

I refer to the Premier's commitment to reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal people in the justice system. Can the minister advise the house what initiatives WA Police has implemented recently to achieve this?

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

I thank the member for Forrestfield for his question with respect to some of the initiatives that we have in the crime prevention space.

I was very pleased last month to announce, with the commissioner, the launch of a new program that WA Police is undertaking in Western Australia. The Turning Point program is designed at targeting first-time offenders. We know that if we put some effort into first-time offenders, we can reduce the recidivism rate and drive down generally the opportunities for repeat offenders to reoffend in the community. The Turning Point program will be launched as a trial in the south east metropolitan district, and also in the Kimberley subdistrict—specifically around Broome. We have chosen a regional setting and a metropolitan setting so that we can determine whether we need to tweak the models and have different models running in regional WA as opposed to south east metro.

The Turning Point program will have eligible offenders enter into a contract with police. They will have to enter into that contract with police within 72 hours of being brought to the attention of police. The contract will require the offenders to enter into a four-month agreement with police, and during the period of the four months of the contract they will obviously be required not to reoffend. What they will need to do is address the causes of their offending behaviour. For example, for young offenders it may be that they have to stick to a curfew, that they need to go to school and that they have to resist hanging around with groups of friends who lead them down that crime pathway. Young offenders will need to have a responsible adult also co-sign the agreement and agree to hold them to account. Obviously, the outcome of a successful completion of a Turning Point contract is that the charge will not be brought against the offender. Instead of having the charge brought against the offender and having a conviction against their record, which can be an impediment to employment, the charge will be dropped, but non-successful completion of the program will obviously result in the charge going before the court, and the usual consequences will apply. We are really hopeful that this program will have the same success it had when it was trialled in the United Kingdom, and we will certainly update the house and the people of Western Australia as to the success of this program.