

REGIONAL COMMUNITIES — CHILD SAFETY

390. Hon JACQUI BOYDELL to the minister representing the Minister for Child Protection:

I refer to a video by the Commissioner of Police that went viral last week.

- (1) What steps is the minister taking to change the circumstances of children in these communities?
- (2) What representation, if any, has the minister made to the federal government to address this issue?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1) It is an incredibly complex issue that requires a multifaceted approach delivered in partnership with communities and local, state and commonwealth governments. The Department of Community Services, specifically through the regional services reform unit, is working with communities and elders to support families and children to have better life outcomes. This reform is focused on delivering improved living conditions that help families to prosper; supporting families to build their skills, and overcome any barriers to doing so, through improved service redesign and delivery; and focusing on education, employment and housing opportunities, including support for families to take them up. District leadership groups have been established in the Pilbara, East and West Kimberley, and the goldfields. These leadership groups are a partnership between the local community, including Aboriginal community-controlled organisations and industry, and local, state and commonwealth governments. They are focused on developing and leading on the ground responses to achieve local outcomes. Strategies such as the Safer Families, Safer Communities Kimberley Family Violence Regional Plan 2015–2020 are also being delivered. This initiative is focused on improving the health, safety and wellbeing of women, children and men living in the Kimberley regions through a reduction in family violence. Similarly, the earlier intervention and family support strategy is another mechanism through which the state is seeking to support the most vulnerable families, and intervene before the issues facing those families reach crisis point.
- (2) Other measures, such as liquor-restricted premises and broader liquor restrictions under the Liquor Control Act 1988, also support families to provide safe environments for their children. Throughout the regional services reform process, the reform unit has worked closely with the commonwealth government, including through the secondment of federal public servants to the reform unit, sharing of expenditure and outcomes data, joint funding of a major housing initiative, and active participation by federal agencies in district leadership groups and local initiatives generated through those groups.