

**YOUTH JUSTICE BOARD — FOETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER**

*Statement by Minister for Police*

**MRS L.M. HARVEY (Scarborough — Minister for Police)** [9.02 am]: In August 2014, Minister Francis announced in Parliament the establishment of a youth justice innovation fund. To date the fund has allocated \$4 million in grants to innovative community-based programs selected by the Youth Justice Board. The aim of these programs is to address some of the multiple and complex factors associated with high reoffending rates, especially amongst young Aboriginal people.

I am pleased to announce that the Youth Justice Board has recommended funding the establishment and delivery of a training, research and assessment clinic for foetal alcohol spectrum disorder. FASD is a form of brain damage. Sufferers are often impulsive and have difficulty relating their actions to consequences. This makes them more likely to end up on the wrong side of the law. Young people with FASD may experience language and speech difficulties and problems with learning, sight and hearing, and may have a higher risk of developing other conditions, such as drug and alcohol addiction. FASD is prevalent in many Aboriginal communities. Today's announcement reinforces the state government's commitment to address the over-representation of Aboriginal people in the criminal justice system.

The concept for the clinic, which will be known as the Fastrack Clinic, was developed by two prominent Western Australian paediatricians, Dr Amanda Wilkins and Dr Raewyn Mutch. During a two-year pilot period, \$195 000 will be allocated to the Fastrack Clinic. The clinic, to be based at the University of Western Australia, will carry out multidisciplinary assessments of children and young people under the age of 18 years and subsequently develop individualised case plans. Case plans and reports developed following these assessments will be useful for informing sentencing authorities and other government agencies in the future. It is intended that, where relevant, these reports will be referred to the Children's Court of Western Australia, where they may be used to guide rehabilitative efforts. Importantly, the clinic will strive to increase awareness of FASD prevention and support at-risk mothers to reduce alcohol intake during pregnancy.

In line with the Youth Justice Board ethos of doing things differently to achieve different results, the clinic will be established as a social enterprise. The Youth Justice Board will support the clinic to develop a sustainable business model with the aim of it becoming financially self-sustainable by the end of the two-year pilot. This initiative provides this government with the opportunity to deliver positive outcomes for children and young people who are at a greater risk of becoming involved with the criminal justice system because of FASD.