

POLICE AND COMMUNITY YOUTH CENTRE COMMUNITY CARE UNIT

848. Ms J.M. FREEMAN to the Minister for Police:

I refer to the engagement of three social workers from the police and community youth centre community care unit to work with the police youth liaison officer in the west metropolitan police district, which has seen a 74 per cent reduction in offending behaviour by young prolific and priority offenders.

- (1) Given the success of this program, which has seen offences drop from 232 to 15 in an eight-month period, why has the government ceased the funding?
- (2) Given the success of this program, will the minister commit to funding it or directing general PCYC funds to it and so ensure the welfare of these young prolific and priority offenders and the safety of the community in that area on an ongoing basis?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY replied:

(1)–(2) The PCYC is actually independent from government.

Ms J.M. Freeman: You funded it, minister!

The SPEAKER: Member for Mirrabooka!

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Thank you, Mr Speaker; it does usually work better if someone asks the question and someone else answers it.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I am sure the member for Nollamara would like an answer to her question.

Ms J.M. Freeman: Mirrabooka.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Mirrabooka—I do apologise.

The PCYC federation is an organisation independent of government. Yes, we provide funding to it to provide services to youth at risk and potential youth at risk in the community. We do not direct the PCYC as to how it spends its funding and where it puts services. What we do, though, is employ youth liaison officers through WA Police to work with the PCYC. The member may remember the Browne review, which made a range of recommendations as to how police and the PCYC should interact in the future to ensure that we provide those services for youth at risk and have an impact on the offending of those prolific, priority offenders who do so much offending of a recidivist nature.

The SPEAKER: Member for Girrawheen!

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: To answer the member for Mirrabooka's question, I can follow up with the section that looks after the police youth liaison officers and find out which activities it is looking at putting in place to ensure that the cohort of offenders who have enjoyed that contact with the social workers continue to have contact with WA Police or PCYC officers, or whichever other independent organisation may be providing those services, so that the very good results that have been achieved continue and we do our best to break the cycle of offending.