

**KIMBERLEY JUVENILE JUSTICE: IMPROVING THE CURRENT
JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM — ADOPTION**

Motion

MS J. FARRER (Kimberley) [4.01 pm]: I move —

That this house calls on the government to adopt the “Kimberley Juvenile Justice” report and implement its recommendations.

This issue has been in my heart, and in the hearts of thousands of Kimberley people, for far too long. It is about the health, wellbeing and future of our young people. How can we sleep at night when we all know too well the issues that our young people face? As leaders and adults, we find it difficult to come up with solutions. Why are we seeing such devastating rates of Aboriginal suicide in the Kimberley? Why are we seeing a drop in the overall number of incarcerated youth but a rise in the incarceration of young Aboriginal people? Why are we not seeing any improvements under the current funding, resources and strategies?

It has been evident for a while now that things are only getting worse. A lot of lessons have been learnt along the way and a lot of strategies have been tried and trialled. I acknowledge all the efforts, funding and resources that have been aimed at trying to tackle this problem, but unfortunately young Aboriginal people in the Kimberley continue to be overrepresented in the justice system. There are ongoing examples of antisocial behaviour and a continual reliance on the welfare system. Community and family homes are breaking down across the Kimberley. We cannot ignore it any longer. It is now time to act. Things need to change. We all need to work together to implement a new approach to help young Aboriginal people in the Kimberley. This is an issue of utmost urgency. I call on the government to place a high priority on setting a new approach to juvenile justice in the Kimberley. This needs to be done now to prevent the high rates of Indigenous adult incarceration, which is causing our prisons to overflow.

I acknowledge that it is no easy feat to improve the current juvenile system, but with small steps that are community and regionally owned and led, we will start to address the complex problems at the heart of this intergenerational crisis. Our new approach must be holistic. It has to go beyond the justice system. We have to reach out to the broken homes and communities. We need to listen to their voices and their cries for help as they plead, beg and scream for comfort and support. Mostly silent pleas, we have to listen and act quickly now. Our people have the ability to turn this crisis around with the added support of government and financial investment. Working together, we can achieve a better future for our young Kimberley people. Together, as a Parliament, as a nation and as a state, we need to make this happen. We must do better. We must improve the future and provide positive pathways for our young people to reach adulthood successfully, with flourishing health and wellbeing. People in the Kimberley are experiencing a crisis that has continued from generation to generation. People are experiencing relationship difficulties, homelessness and mental health issues, antisocial behaviour, unemployment and drug and alcohol addictions. There are high rates of incarceration and suicide. Kimberley children are a means to turning this crisis around, but only if they are provided for and supported in the best way possible.

Today, we call on the government to invest in young people in the Kimberley. We are proposing some much-needed improvements to the current Kimberley youth justice system through a series of considered recommendations developed by the Kimberley alternative juvenile justice working group. The report, “Kimberley Juvenile Justice: Improving the Current Juvenile Justice System”, states —

The *Working Group* was established at the request of Dr John Boulton, Kimberley Health Senior Paediatrician. Dr Boulton called on ... Member for Kimberley, to advocate at a state level for resources for diversionary programs in the Kimberley to prevent boys within the youth justice system suffering the emotional trauma of being sent to prison in Perth.

The *Working Group* comprises representatives from key public sector agencies and the not-for-profit sector ...

The groups include the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, Save the Children Australia’s Helping Young People Engage program, Fitzroy Valley Men’s Shed, Kimberley Indigenous Coordination Centres, Broome Police and Community Youth Centre, Kimberley district police office, Wunan Foundation, Disability Services Commission, Kimberley Youth Justice Services, Patches Paediatric Child Health and Education Services, Men’s Outreach Service Inc, Alive and Kicking Goals suicide prevention project, Australian Manufacturing Workers’ Union, Telethon Institute for Child Health Research, Kimberley District Education Office, Marninwarntikura Fitzroy Women’s Resource Centre, Indigenous Community Volunteers, Yura Yungi Aboriginal Medical Service, Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services Council, Broome Regional Aboriginal Medical Service, Kimberley Land Council, Kimberley Regional Economic Development, Marra Worra Worra, Yawuru

Aboriginal Corporation, Kimberley Institute Ltd, Yiriman Project and Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Cultural Centre.

The report also states —

“The primary focus [is] on improving the wellbeing of young people in the north. Children in the justice system should be treated as individuals who have suffered early life trauma and are emotionally damaged, and who therefore need care, protection and treatment.”

...

There has been widespread criticism of the current youth justice system, as it has not effectively improved its approach to the incarceration of juvenile offenders.

Often, young people absorb what they see and hear within their confinement. We need to be more aware of this. As we all know and understand, if people do not have continual connections to whatever their belief system is, they become lost in everything they do. On traditional country—or homelands, as we call them—juveniles and young adults can reconnect with their spiritual and cultural world on ancestral lands, which is very important for their wellbeing. They think better, work better and are positive about themselves. They begin to understand where and what they have done wrong. It is all about education. But it is in the way Aboriginal culture provides the teaching and learning that shows respect to not only other people, but also themselves. This has slipped past them and numbs a lot of feelings related to them being caring people.

I would like to refer to the Amnesty International report titled “The Land Holds Us: Aboriginal Peoples’ Right to Traditional Homelands in the Northern Territory” released in August 2011. I have a copy of it here. Amnesty International found that homelands are seen as places of respite. Many of these places play a role in the rehabilitation of addicts—such as petrol sniffers and alcoholics—and offenders through the provisions of detention diversionary programs. These include training, employment and self-esteem programs for troubled youth and young people.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on homeland also have greater community control and agency, as seen in the many examples of strong governance and community-based decision-making models around Australia. Studies have also shown that Aboriginal peoples are healthier and live longer on traditional homelands. They point to very strong and significant improvements in health outcomes for Aboriginal peoples in remote areas if they live in homeland communities. This is the result of having better access to healthy foods, being able to gather traditional foods and there being lower levels of social problems such as domestic violence and substance abuse.

The working group’s purpose was to develop recommendations for the improvement of the current Kimberley youth justice system based on its experience and knowledge, and building on the work and research of other organisations such as the Amnesty International report I have just referred to. The underlying principles that the working group sought to address are the following. Children in the justice system should be treated as individuals who have suffered early life trauma and are emotionally damaged, and who therefore need care, protection and treatment. The objectives for youth within the youth justice system should be predicated on the fiduciary responsibility of the community and the statutory authority of the state to provide care and protection from harm, as well as for psychiatric and emotional rehabilitation to be delivered by staff trained specifically for this role. The impacts of justice issues of all youth from the Kimberley region should be primarily managed within the region. This is to prevent disconnection from family, country and culture, and to eliminate the punitive approach of juvenile detention that does not address the underlying causes of behaviour and often increases the risk of repeat offending. All youth who are registered with youth justice services should receive comprehensive assessment to identify causal factors such as early trauma and intellectual development disability from foetal alcohol spectrum disorder and other causes. Magistrates should have more sentencing and remanding options with the aim of utilising existing and proposed juvenile justice programs in the Kimberley region. The underlying issues and causes of our youth’s troubled behaviour must be identified. Kimberley youth should not be sent to Perth for detention. Early intervention is the key to preventing ongoing juvenile offending cycles.

Government funding is essential and should be invested in the Kimberley for Kimberley people. Prevention and diversion programs are primary solutions in reducing juvenile offending cycles. Supporting families and offering positive lifestyle programs is key to preventing ongoing juvenile offending cycles. Support must be provided to community-based initiatives that provide positive local programs that really make a difference to people’s lives including the Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Culture Centre, Halls Creek Healing Taskforce, the Wunan Foundation, the organisations delivering the Marulu FASD strategy, the Kimberley station placements program, the Kimberley empowerment and leadership program, Feed the Little Children and the West Kimberley and East Kimberley youth bail options program. Support should also be given to KALACC to establish an Aboriginal-owned and controlled youth justice diversion program. The government departments’ silo approach does not work. All departments need to work closely together and develop effective interagency

communication methods as well as data sharing. All children learn differently. Many Kimberley children find it difficult to engage when mainstream teaching methods are used. Alternative options to education and hands-on delivery methods, including pre-apprenticeship training in schools, must be developed and made available for students to commence in year 7 through to year 12. Aboriginal participation in the economy is imperative and young people must be given every opportunity to contribute.

In summary we want to manage Kimberley issues in the Kimberley. Government funding is essential and should be invested in the Kimberley for culturally appropriate programs that benefit the young people of the Kimberley. There are 19 recommendations included in the report—I have a copy of that report here—that address these key principles and I urge every member of Parliament to take the time to read the recommendations. If government and non-government bodies form better joint relationships to establish effective and efficient prevention, diversion and intervention programs, there will be an overall improvement in the current Kimberley youth justice system. With the recommendations in this report implemented, there will be a significant improvement in the general wellbeing of Kimberley youth, which will be reflected by a reduction in the number of attempted and completed suicides by youth and young adults in the Kimberley. We must support our young and provide positive pathways to adulthood. We must approach their needs with an attitude of compassion and with the intention of resolving the underlying issues and the factors that contribute to adverse wellbeing and antisocial behaviour in our region, instead of a mindset of trivial punishment. I endorse the recommendations included in this report and believe they will provide a best practice model in the Kimberley for addressing juvenile justice. This report is a product of the determination and passion Kimberley people have towards making beneficial tangible changes in the Kimberley. It is desired for a collective approach for individual pathways to be created for youth to successfully enter adulthood without facing drug and alcohol addictions, adult incarceration, self-harm or suicide. Kimberley people must be empowered to lead reforms needed to achieve visions that are meaningful to them, and that will work to benefit the entire region. Service providers must improve their methods of communication and collaboration with each other. A collective impact approach is necessary for service providers to capitalise on programs and delivery, to reduce unnecessary duplication of programs and for funding to be utilised effectively throughout the region to improve juvenile justice issues in the Kimberley. The Liberal government says it is committed to improving Aboriginal health, increasing school attendance and reducing crime—so invest in it; invest in these recommendations! In order for Kimberley issues to be managed in the Kimberley, the recommendations in this report must be supported, implemented and funded collaboratively by both the current and successive state and federal governments. This is a real plan for action. I call on the government to adopt the report and implement the recommendations. I ask that the Kimberley alternative juvenile justice report be laid on the table for the remainder of the day and I will be personally handing a copy of the report to the Premier and the Minister for Corrective Services and request that they formally respond to the recommendations on behalf of the government.

[The paper was tabled for the information of members.]

MR M. McGOWAN (Rockingham — Leader of the Opposition) [4.17 pm]: First of all, I congratulate the member for Kimberley on the preparation of this Kimberley juvenile justice report she has laid on the table of the house today. It is a comprehensive and interesting document of 47 pages full of ideas and recommendations on what the state should do to deal with, in particular, juvenile justice issues in the Kimberley. We all need to congratulate the member of Kimberley and her staff, in particular Mala Croft, who works in the member for Kimberley's office, on their extraordinary effort in pulling together the working group and all of the discussion and consideration that went to preparing this document. Page 10 of the report shows the number of people involved in its preparation, including Dr John Boulton, a paediatrician from the Kimberley who I met when I visited the member for Kimberley's electorate in, I think, July. The extent of the consultation and work that has gone on is really quite a magnificent effort and the member for Kimberley should be very proud of what she has done, because rather than thinking she knows best—as members of Parliament we all know we know best! —

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

Mr M. McGOWAN: For the purposes of *Hansard*, that was humour! Often humour does not come across well in written form.

The member for Kimberley consulted people across the community with experience in these issues, and for that she needs to be congratulated. She has lived with these issues her entire life, mixing with people who have been involved and in touch with the justice system in the Kimberley. In this report, she has tried to come up with ways of dealing with young people who might get involved or be involved in the justice system and get them out of that cycle of behaviour that invariably ends in tears. A range of recommendations in this report that try to get people away from the justice system and onto a better course in life deserve consideration by the government. The member for Kimberley's life story is quite interesting and amazing, if members ever get to hear it. She has had experience for a long time of mixing with people who have been involved in the justice system. She has done something about an issue that she cares deeply about.

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Wednesday, 17 September 2014]

p6482b-6489a

Ms Josie Farrer; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr John Day

This report would have wider implications for other parts of regional Western Australia, in particular, where there are concentrations of young Aboriginal people who get caught up in the justice system. We need to try to find ways to break that contact. I am constantly amazed by the fact that as a state we take young people away from some of the most remote communities in the world, put them on planes with prison officers, fly them to a larger community, put them on another aircraft, fly them to Perth, put them in a van, take them to a juvenile detention centre, where they stay for weeks, months or sometimes years, and think that that will somehow help the problem. I am constantly amazed by that. I have seen kids sitting on aircraft with one or two prison officers. It is expensive, counterproductive and does not work. I understand the concept of crime and punishment. I understand that if one does something wrong, there should be a consequence. We need to think about the consequence. Will the consequence improve the situation or make it worse? To fly kids to Perth from remote communities around Western Australia, particularly the Kimberley, is expensive. We can imagine the staff costs et cetera involved. If we take children away from the environment with which they are familiar, the family they know and the communities that they have lived in and put them in another environment in which they mix with other people whom they do not know who have also been involved in misbehaviour or criminal activity and think that that will somehow stop them from committing crimes, I think there is evidence to show that it does not stop them committing crimes. This happens in communities all over the state, and we need to somehow come up with ways of breaking that. I find it incredible that we have not come up with overarching better ways of dealing with this issue. I know that there are individual better ways and individual programs have worked.

The consequence for lots of these young people throughout life is alcohol abuse, other substance abuse, suicide, contact with the justice system, unemployment, general unhappiness and probably a family breakdown. All these issues proceed through life. At some point we need to come up with solutions that work and that prevent a large proportion of people ending up in that situation. We know that many of these young people are born with conditions beyond their control. If a child's mother drank alcohol whilst she was pregnant, particularly to excess, that child is often born with foetal alcohol syndrome disorder. Therefore, it is very difficult for that child to go through life with all the expectations of someone without FASD. We need to find ways of breaking that FASD cycle. It is not easy to break that cycle. There are recommendations in this report on things that can be done to break that cycle. I spent nine days with the member for Kimberley in July. We visited various communities in the Kimberley. We also need to recognise that if young people have FASD, using those techniques of putting them on an aircraft, flying them from the community they are familiar with and putting them in a juvenile detention centre in Perth perhaps will not work. This report is very interesting because it refers to all those sorts of initiatives that have been shown to be successful over time such as placing young people, I suspect particularly boys, into programs that enable them to work on stations, learn horsemanship and those things that for many decades gave Aboriginal people in the Kimberley, the Pilbara and northern parts of Australia a great sense of purpose and a great sense of achievement. The first recommendation in the report relates to those sorts of activities that Aboriginal people have shown a great love for and a great propensity to do well in for the past 100 years or so.

The other recommendations relate to greater communication between government agencies across the Kimberley, in particular, and sharing information about individuals, so we get a coordinated approach with individuals and different sentencing options. I remember Antoine Bloemen, who offered children a bike if they did not come before him for a year or two years or something of that nature. That was out of his pocket. I remember hearing people on talkback radio attacking him for rewarding children for criminal activity. That is one perspective. On the other hand, we could say that he was trying something new that might work. Sometimes incentives work better than punishment. The idea that we might trial different sentencing options apart from the ones we currently use is a great idea. That is in the report. There are some recommendations around that.

Support for existing and proposed juvenile justice programs and funding for youth workers, youth centres and swimming pools in remote communities are all good ideas. Then there is the Wunan Foundation. The Wunan Foundation has great plans for trying to create new ways of dealing with people who do not send their children to school, dealing with people whose children misbehave or who are involved in criminal activity and making the community have a sense of responsibility for holding those families to account. Basically, it is about communities, Indigenous people and leaders in the Indigenous community having the power to deal with those families locally and actual ways and accountability measures to ensure that those families improve their responsibility towards their children.

The member for Kimberley's report entitled "Kimberley Juvenile Justice: Improving the Current Juvenile Justice System" also contains a recommendation for mandatory health and wellbeing assessments for children and youth, particularly for FASD assessments; station placement programs, to which I have referred, to try to get young people engaged in greater activity in the pastoral industry; and alternative education options for students who do not participate in school. There are some great high schools in the Kimberley. I recall that in 2006 Broome Senior High School was number one in the results for public high schools in Western Australia, and it traditionally does quite well. The new high school in Fitzroy Crossing and the high schools in Halls Creek and

Kununurra are all good schools, but mainstream schooling does not work for some people so there is a need to come up with alternative programs. Alternative programs are already out there, but in this part of the world, where a large number of young people are truanting, alternative education pathways are needed. As it says in the report, pre-apprenticeship, apprenticeship programs and different models of education are essential, particularly in the Kimberley and Pilbara, to break the cycle that is currently occurring among young people. The member for Kimberley has come up with some great work and I hope the government has a very good look at it.

However, in this context, I am disturbed by the cuts the commonwealth government is making to Indigenous programs. I raise this matter because it is very relevant to the Kimberley in particular. The member for Kimberley grieved in this place last week about the funding cuts to children and family centres in Halls Creek, Fitzroy Crossing, Kununurra and the Pilbara. Children and family centres are funded by the commonwealth government—members will get the gist—and they bring together in a central location services and education for families so that they can learn some of the skills to raise a family. As I said, these centres established in Halls Creek, Fitzroy Crossing and Kununurra are being funded only to this year. If the commonwealth government does not fund those centres into the future, which cost tens of millions of dollars to run, they will close. The commonwealth has said that its funding of this program is now over. The program was part of the \$42 million National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Early Childhood Development program. As I said, five centres were built in Western Australia in Halls Creek, Fitzroy Crossing, Kununurra, I think Wyndham, and in the Pilbara, but they are going to close. On top of that, in the most recent federal budget, \$534 million over four years will be taken away from the Indigenous affairs portfolio. The Premier has explained in this place the reasons the government will not pick up funding for some seniors' partnership agreement programs and seniors' assistance programs but he has said, "However, the state government has to pick up some of the cost of supporting remote communities, because the commonwealth is pulling out of that." I do not know how much that will be, but, as we know, scores of remote communities receive assistance for power, water and the like. The Premier has said in this place that the commonwealth is pulling out and the state has to pick that up and that that was an unexpected cost. What I find incredible, after \$534 million is taken out of Indigenous affairs, is that the family and children centres across the remote areas of the state are being defunded. The support from the commonwealth for electricity, water and essential services in remote communities is being removed. I find it incredible that the Prime Minister calls himself the Prime Minister for Indigenous Australians. How can he say that?

[Member's time extended.]

Mr M. McGOWAN: How can he say that?

Mr V.A. Catania: Who is stopping water?

Mr M. McGOWAN: The Premier said it. I did not saying stopping water; I said that the commonwealth is withdrawing funding from remote communities and the state is picking it up. That was the Premier's advice to the house. If the commonwealth is doing that, how can the Prime Minister call himself the Prime Minister for Indigenous Australians when he pulls out half a billion dollars of support from the Closing the Gap initiatives, the initiatives around family and children centres and the initiatives to support remote communities? The commonwealth government is either putting it on the state or it is just getting out of it altogether. How can he call himself the Prime Minister for Indigenous Australians? That is what he said he would do when he was elected. Now he has arrived in office, he has gone to stay in a tent in Arnhem Land. That is great TV viewing but, frankly, it is a stunt when the Prime Minister pulls out of that sort of support for Aboriginal communities across the country. That is plain when one looks at the facts. I saw the imagery of the green army tents and the Prime Minister planting trees and standing with children and playing, which looks great on television. But what he does is what counts, not the images on TV. I wish that at one of his press conferences someone would hold him to account and ask him how he can call himself the Prime Minister for Indigenous Australians, how he can stay in a tent in Arnhem Land and yet pull half a billion dollars out of essential programs for health and other services in remote communities. It does not compute. It does not make sense. That point needs to be made and I wish someone would pose it to him, because a lot of hypocrisy is going on here.

I congratulate the member for Kimberley for her report and the people in the community groups who were involved. I congratulate Mala Croft from the member for Kimberley's office on her excellent work. I look forward to this report being considered at a future date after the government has had some time to consider the member for Kimberley's recommendations.

MR P. PATALIA (Warnbro) [4.37 pm]: I, too, would like to make a contribution in support of the member for Kimberley's presentation to the house of her report "Kimberley Juvenile Justice: Improving the Current Juvenile Justice System". Like the Leader of the Opposition, I commend the report and acknowledge the work that has gone into it, particularly the work done by the member for Kimberley and her staff. Mala Croft should be acknowledged. As I do that, I think it is worth taking a moment to reflect on one particular paragraph at the

beginning of this report that gives an insight into the considerable stature of the member for Kimberley within her community and the asset that she is to not only her community, but also the state. Page 10 of the report refers to the role of the Kimberley Alternative Juvenile Justice Strategy Working Group. That is a big mouthful, but it is a significant and considerable group. The member for Kimberley listed the number of participants, which is enormous. I think it is probably one of the largest groups of its nature anywhere in the nation, let alone in Western Australia. It is significant that it came together and sought the member for Kimberley's assistance to provide leadership on its behalf. The paragraph I would like to read into *Hansard* states —

The Working Group was established at the request of Dr John Boulton, Kimberley Health Senior Paediatrician. Dr Boulton called on Josie Farrer, Member for Kimberley, to advocate at a state level for resources for diversionary programs in the Kimberley to prevent boys within the youth justice system suffering the emotional trauma of being sent to prison in Perth.

The member for Kimberley is doing that. The working group approached a strong voice in their region—someone who represents its region in this place and right around the state in a powerful way. I know the report will grab the attention of the Minister for Corrective Services and the Premier. As the Leader of the Opposition has indicated, we understand that the government needs time to address and consider the report, but what I like about this report is that there are a number of significant recommendations that must have taken—I know this because I was on the periphery of some of the conversations around it—a lot of work to get to the point at which the working group could provide a fairly concise number of recommendations that are very specific and pragmatic and have the intention to do good things, not just talk about things.

The recommendations that I want to reflect on in particular refer to conducting more research to build our knowledge. The Leader of the Opposition and the member for Kimberley have already referred to foetal alcohol spectrum disorder as a significant issue, the problems associated with it and all the challenges that we confront. Recommendation 6 in this report states —

Mandatory health and well-being assessments for all Kimberley youths registered in the Kimberley juvenile justice system including but not limited to:

1. FASD assessment;
2. Assessments targeting a broad range of learning difficulties which interrupt a child's social developmental pathway;
3. Assess and identify intellectual developmental disability; and
4. Assess cognitive and emotional status of at-risk students.

That is essential. Members might think that is a wonderful revelation and an incredible insight; we should learn about what is wrong physically and intellectually and in the context of individuals who may be suffering from a disability when we consider them in a juvenile justice environment. Members might think that would have been one of the first things that anyone would have thought of. I commend the working group for identifying it yet again, but it is not as though it is a new revelation to this place, and it is not as though anyone in Western Australia should not have thought about it before now. Worst of all, and most shamefully, it is not as though people within the department responsible for juvenile justice, juvenile detention and juvenile offending and addressing that challenge have not had this issue brought to their attention before now and have not been asked for that very information.

As the minister knows, at least twice during his tenure—he has been in the position for less than two years—I have asked exactly those questions of his department. Shamefully—not to the minister's shame; I do not like having a crack at public servants—if a government department does not have the resources to do something, it should draw it to the attention of its minister and the government and demand those resources. If it is something as essential as providing basic information about how many children in the department's care are suffering from FASD, it should know that, and if it does not have the resources to provide that information, it should seek out those resources because that information has fundamental implications for how all those individuals will play out throughout the system.

Mr J.M. Francis: Some paediatricians have just finalised a standard examination of everyone when they get involved in the system so that this can be addressed. I do not want to take up the member's time, but when I walked around Banksia Hill last Wednesday, the population there was about 145, of which six were girls and 80 per cent of the boys are Aboriginal, half of whom obviously have FASD with significant physical and mental development disorders. It is obvious to someone who is not a doctor, but it is being sorted.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The minister knows that on 11 June last year I asked a question on notice about how many juveniles in detention had FASD. The department's response in *Hansard* was —

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Wednesday, 17 September 2014]

p6482b-6489a

Ms Josie Farrer; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr John Day

In view of resource implications (specialist practitioners in the relevant fields), the Department's capacity to diagnose non medication treatment conditions, such as foetal alcohol syndrome disorder is limited.

That happened a year ago, so I asked again this year on 26 June how many children have FASD, and the department advised that the data was not available.

Mr J.M. Francis: Ask me again shortly.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I will be relieved if the minister can answer me shortly. I also acknowledge and commend the second recommendation in this report that states —

That there is mandatory notification by Police to the Department of Corrective Services, Kimberley Regional Youth Justice Services, for all Kimberley youths Police serve with a caution or court order.

I have witnessed the frustration felt by the member for Kimberley and her staff in ascertaining what members would think is a fairly simple set of data with regard to how many children the police come into contact with and caution or give a court order to. I do not think it is the fault of the minister's Department of Corrective Services, but it seems bizarre if one department is doing that, which has serious implications for the Department of Corrective Services that has to then suddenly wear the consequences and is not notified in advance or at the same time when the issue occurs. The Department of Corrective Services has a powerful preventive role that needs more funding and more focus. I know the minister is working towards that, but if the department immediately knows when a new individual comes onto the police radar, the corrective services world should also know so that youth services can get in there and identify what the issue is and try to deal with it. The second recommendation is a wonderful recommendation. All the recommendations are worthy of consideration.

I do not want to speak for much longer. I know the intent is to try to move along with other things and let the government consider this report. However, I will say that the observation made by the member for Kimberley about government agencies is accurate, and it is not isolated to the Barnett government as has been the case historically. She said that government agencies appear to be incapable of coordinating activity, particularly for difficult juveniles who have created a problem. By the time the Department of Corrective Services learns of the problem and engages with it, it is well down the track. The first department likely to encounter those people is probably the Department of Education. I know that the Department of Health could be involved because it could potentially identify mothers at that early stage who are living in a difficult and challenging environment. However, by the time the child has got to a stage at which flags should be raised up the pole to warn government that there is an issue, it is affecting not only the child, but also their environment, their family and potentially their community. The Department of Education probably has the earliest contact to identify those children at risk, because hopefully the child will receive an early childhood education.

Another big issue in the Kimberley is whether we are even reaching kids early enough, as many of them do not even encounter education until it is very late, or too late. The issue about government departments having the capacity to work together and focus services across government departments in coordination with non-government organisations and other tiers of government is a serious matter that should be addressed. I have said to the minister before in this place, and to his predecessors—about three of them—that there was a program that had the capacity to force that coordination using the theory behind multi-systemic therapy and focusing on serious juvenile offenders in the home providing 24/7 support. Before it was cancelled, it was called the family intensive team program, and prior to that when it was initiated in Western Australia, it was called the intensive supervision program. I argue that that program needed resourcing and support at a higher level, but it had the potential to enact exactly what the member for Kimberley is saying and what we all know is the problem in many communities when departments do not coordinate activity and provide support in an effective and focused fashion. I will commend this report to the minister that, sadly, the minister's predecessor, Hon Christian Porter, used to cancel the program. I commend to the minister the review of the intensive supervision program in June 2009 because it made the observation that the ISP filled an important need for family systemic intervention in cases when the young person was at high risk of entering a criminal career. There was only limited suitable data with which to judge the effectiveness of the program, but the quantity of information, the literature and the multi-systemic therapy findings of the Department of Health all pointed to it being an effective program.

The government abandoned that program in 2010 with a view to shifting the money elsewhere. I understand that people would have made recommendations to that end, but I suggest that the minister revisit that report in the context of the recommendations from the report the member for Kimberley tabled, which suggests that there is a real need. I think this is an opportunity. If multiple agencies are acting on the one family or household, and the one or multiple individuals in that household, and all agencies are doing concurrent activity without coordination, doubtless there are savings to be had—and, more importantly, there are better outcomes to be had by coordinating the agencies' activities. If the government does nothing else in response to

Extract from *Hansard*

[ASSEMBLY — Wednesday, 17 September 2014]

p6482b-6489a

Ms Josie Farrer; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr John Day

recommendation 3 that there needs to be a formal agreement between government agencies, it should revisit the intensive supervision program and the report on its effectiveness.

That aside, I finish by saying that I share the Leader of the Opposition's admiration for the member for Kimberley. What a wonderful member and advocate she is for her community and what a significant contribution she is making by bringing this type of report and such motions to the house and to the attention of the people of Western Australia. As the Leader of the Opposition indicated, these recommendations benefit not just the people in the Kimberley, but they also have applications right around the regions and more likely in the metropolitan area. The challenges associated with the kids we have talked about are felt in everyone's electorate, not just the member for Kimberley's electorate. I commend the motion, and commend once more the member for Kimberley.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr J.H.D. Day (Leader of the House)**.