

TARGET 120 — KARRATHA

131. Mr K.J.J. MICHEL to the Minister for Community Services:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to supporting at-risk young people through successful early intervention programs such as Target 120.

- (1) Can the minister advise the house how Target 120 is making communities across Western Australia safer, while also steering at-risk youth away from the criminal justice system?
- (2) Can the minister update the house on the government's \$11.1 million investment in Target 120 at nine additional locations, including Karratha?

Ms S.E. WINTON replied:

I thank the member for Pilbara for his ongoing strong advocacy for his community, particularly at-risk children and families in his community. He is doing a fantastic job.

- (1)–(2) The McGowan government's early intervention program, Target 120, is helping to steer at-risk young people away from the criminal justice system, helping us to create safer communities. The program has been extremely successful to date, with nearly half of all participants not having any further contact with the justice system. We see these great results that this program is achieving and know that the best way to ensure that it succeeds is to engage with local service providers and local people with a good understanding of their own communities and strong connections with local people and young people.

Since 2018, \$31.5 million has been invested by the McGowan government into this important early intervention program at a total of 20 sites. That included investment of \$11.1 million from the last budget to roll out this important and very successful program in nine new locations, including Karratha of course, member for Pilbara. Earlier this month, it was my great pleasure to travel to the Pilbara and to places like Newman, Port Hedland and Karratha and get a clear understanding that "King Kevin" is ruling up there. People can see lots of infrastructure and investment that has transformed the Pilbara in the last six years. From the perspective of my portfolios, it was really nice to see the priority that the member for Pilbara is placing on supporting his community and the local communities with what are some challenging issues not only in the Pilbara but throughout the state, and I commend him for that.

Of course, together with the member for Pilbara, we announced that the Robe River Kuruma Aboriginal Corporation is the successful service provider chosen to deliver Target 120 in Karratha. Robe River is an Aboriginal community-controlled organisation and has been in operation since 2013. It represents the Robe River Kuruma people, who have traditional rights to an area covering nearly 16 000 square kilometres in the Pilbara. It is committed to progressing the interests of the Robe River Kuruma people and delivering capacity-building programs to help improve the community. It is little wonder that, with its experience and commitment to the local community, it is perfectly placed to deliver the Target 120 program in Karratha. A community youth officer has been working with an interagency group to identify suitable young people for the program while arrangements are underway for Robe River to take over the program.

This is another example of the McGowan government's commitment to improving the lives of young people and supporting young people and steering them away from the youth justice system. Service providers and agencies work together to tackle the various factors that increase a young person's chance of interacting with the youth justice system. They are complex issues; it is alcohol and drug related, it is housing, it is domestic violence and it is a failure to engage with school. Target 120, at its heart, brings people and organisations together to support young people to turn around their lives. It has been successful. The data shows that nearly 50 per cent of young people who have been engaged with the Target 120 program have had no future contact with the youth justice system.

Karratha is the fifteenth Target 120 site to be rolled out in WA, and more locations are being implemented as a priority across the state. I look forward to updating the house at every opportunity I get about this most successful program. I know that the member is really pleased that the Robe River Kuruma Aboriginal Corporation is doing this important work. It was lovely to talk to Terrance, Rodney and Tom about their vision to support young people in their community.

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Liberal Party, with the last question.