

TARGET 120 — NEWMAN AND CARNARVON

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

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to ensuring at-risk young people are supported in their communities.

- (1) Can the minister outline to the house how the expansion of Target 120 to Newman and Carnarvon will work in partnership with other measures to keep the community safe?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house how this early intervention program will assist in steering at-risk youth away from the criminal justice system?

Ms S.E. WINTON replied:

I thank the member for Pilbara for the question.

- (1)–(2) There is no question that the cycle of youth offending in some of our regional areas is simply unsustainable. It is also a sad fact that many of the underlying issues are not recent; they have been a long time in the making over many, many generations, and solutions will not be achieved overnight. But absolutely what will work is when communities work together. It takes all parts of the community, it takes all levels of government and it takes a sustained effort from all involved. As a former teacher in some of the most remote parts of the state, I know that to be true. Programs work best when they are led by community and supported by community to work locally.

I recently had the opportunity to visit both Newman, with the member for Pilbara, and Carnarvon. As members know, Carnarvon in particular has attracted attention for antisocial behaviour. I had some really productive meetings with local police, the shire president and, most importantly, local staff from the Department of Communities. I listened to them and heard of the incredible work they are doing in trying to work within their communities to solve really challenging problems. Overwhelmingly, I heard that alcohol abuse in Carnarvon is undeniably the key driver that gets in the way of people doing important work with children and families.

I commend the director of Liquor Licensing's recent proposal for stringent liquor restrictions in Carnarvon. It is simply unacceptable that alcohol-related crime is 16.2 times higher in Carnarvon than in the Perth metropolitan area. It is simply unacceptable that alcohol-related family assaults are eight times higher than in the Perth metropolitan area. Liquor restrictions, including strengthening the banned drinkers register, is one important approach, but of course we know that will only buy us some time to allow people in places such as Carnarvon to do the important work they do. At the crux of supporting these people are the early intervention strategies. Early intervention is the key to long-term solutions. Members have heard me talk about programs such as Target 120, which addresses youth crime at an individual level before young people's lives spiral out of control. Newman and Carnarvon are now the latest towns to join the Target 120 program. This program has a proven track record, with around half of participants not having future contact with the juvenile justice system. We know it works. In fact, since 2018 we have invested \$31.5 million to roll out Target 120 around the state, with an additional \$11 million in the last budget to roll it out to nine additional sites.

It was a pleasure to join the member for Pilbara during my visit to Newman, where we announced that the Kanyirninpa Jukurrpa Aboriginal Corporation had been appointed to run this program in Newman. KJ has already been running amazing on-country trips that have generated transformative change across Martu communities. This is the exact type of local service provider that we need and want to support in driving that change in communities. I want to acknowledge KJ corporation and the time it gave me to share some of the important work that it is doing with its communities and how excited it is to be supported through Target 120 to keep going with the work that it knows will work to make a difference in young people's lives.

Yesterday, I met with Ngala to announce that it had been appointed to deliver Target 120 in Carnarvon. Our community youth officer, Harmony Gould, an incredible local champion, has been working with an interagency group to identify suitable young people who will benefit from this program, and of course their families, while arrangements were being finalised to announce the service provider. Ngala is doing incredible work right around the state and has done an extraordinary job in Carnarvon around a number of services, so it is well placed to do that work in Carnarvon. I also met Reynold, who will be working with Ngala as part of the Target 120 program. He is a local Carnarvon person. That is absolutely critical because at the heart of Target 120 is engaging with young people and building up their trust so that people like Reynold who are involved in running the program can support them to build an individualised plan that they are committed to. We can provide supports around that individualised plan so that those young people can turn their lives around. I know that Ngala will do a great job in Carnarvon because it partners

with MEEDAC in Geraldton to run Target 120 in Geraldton, so it has great experience and it understands what is at the heart of Target 120.

Rolling out these programs to Carnarvon and Newman is a strong specific example of how the McGowan Labor government is focused on early intervention as the long-term solution for what are challenging problems throughout the region.

The SPEAKER: I give the call to the Leader of the Opposition with the last question.