

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

955

Question without notice
of which some notice has been given

Thursday August 18, 2011

Robin Chapple MLC to the Minister for Child Protection

With reference to allegations raised by Mr Andrew Forrest in Four Corners programme "Iron & Dust" (18 July 2011), that young girls had offered themselves to him for a cigarette, and also

The allegation raised by Mr Forrest in an interview with Peter Thompson as part of the "Yakety Yak" series available online (link provided <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ouWyVmtdifk>) that Aboriginal girls in Halls Creek, at three o'clock in the morning, had likewise tried to proposition him.

I ask:

1. Has Mr Forrest made any report(s) to the Department of Child Protection raising these concerns?
2. If the Minister is not in a position to disclose the name of a notifier, can the Minister confirm whether any reports have been made to the Department of Child Protection of incidents of nature in Roebourne, or in Halls Creek?
3. Has the Minister received a letter from the Yindjibarndi Aboriginal Corporation expressing their concerns about these allegations?
4. What action is being taken to address the allegations and concerns in the community about their lack of veracity?

I thank the Hon Member for some notice of this question.

1. Mr Forrest has not contacted the Department for Child Protection.
2. One referral was recently made to the Western Australia Police Service and the Department for Child Protection, and a joint response was undertaken to assess the safety of the children.
3. Yes.

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4. Between September 2009 and March 2011, the Department for Child Protection (the Department) and the Western Australia Police (WA Police) were involved in a joint partnership in Roebourne to investigate reports that young girls were offering sex to gain money for drugs. This investigation has led to ten local men being charged with sexual offences against children. All of the young people involved have been referred to appropriate counseling services and their families have been contacted by the Department and offered appropriate support services. I understand that since the conclusion of this operation, there have been no reports of young girls approaching men late at night. The Department continues to work with local agencies, including the WA Police, in looking at proactive strategies to prevent young people from engaging in risk taking behavior late at night.