



BUSH BREAKAWAY YOUTH ACTION PROGRAM
9 July 2002

Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders): We all applaud big results for a small outlay. With the 2002 budget to be delivered soon I draw the attention of the house, in particular the Attorney-General, to a program which costs only a few thousand dollars but which is achieving a high return for one of the most disadvantaged groups in our community, and which, I hope, will continue to receive funding. I refer to the Bush Breakaway Youth Action Program at Ceduna sponsored by Tjutjunaku Worka Tjuta Incorporated (TWT)—

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson interjecting:

Mrs PENFOLD: I know—the central Aboriginal agency in Ceduna. The program works with children to curb youth crime, to break the cycle of juvenile offending and to prevent those who are considered at risk from moving into the criminal scene. The program is a partnership between the Ceduna community and key community service providers, supported by the state government. For many years the Ceduna community has experienced a range of crime issues consisting of property, personal and public order offences. Bush Breakaway addresses these issues in a manner that has already proved to be advantageous for all who are affected or involved.

The program provides young people with pathways away from offending by working with them and their families on a number of different levels. A key feature is the pairing of each youth with a mentor who works with the participant on a one-to-one basis 10 hours a week guiding, learning and monitoring progress. They do things together such as going fishing or to football training; and they share social occasions to build the participant's social skills and to develop every day living skills. All mentors undergo a training and screening process with both SA Police and Family and Youth Services (FAYS); hold a current senior first aid certificate; are trained to deal with situations where abuse may be occurring; and are studying or hold certificate 3 in community services, that is, youth work.

The project develops strong community leaders and puts the emphasis back on the role of community elders (fostered in the role of mentors and camp leaders) as vital in the lives of young Aboriginal people. Another key element is the increasing involvement of the youths' families, who have combined to form the family support group which meets fortnightly. The project has already shown strength in community cohesiveness and revitalisation, with interest and commitment to the program from across the community. The program coordinator, TWT's Chris Francis, attributes the success of the program so far to strong support from Ceduna police, magistrates, FAYS, Ceduna Area School, Crossways Lutheran School and Weena Mooga Gu Gudba women's group. The latter donated an old troop carrier to the program, a gift that has proved useful and enjoyable.

Mr Francis praised the positive feedback from parents and schools, the general community support and the acceptance of the program. Senior Sergeant Kym Thomas, the officer in charge of Ceduna police station, has given the program his full support, describing it as a great initiative with a Ceduna flavour to it. He said that if one kid can be prevented from entering a life of crime, then it was a success. Flora Rumbelow, Ceduna Area School principal, said attendance of students involved in the program has improved. As a reward for progress, a camp in the Gawler Ranges has been planned for the youths, as well as a family trip to the Head of the Bight for some whale watching.

The program arose from an environmental scan and crime statistics analysis from which the priority issue for the

Ceduna community was determined as the number of young Aboriginal people involved in at risk and criminal behaviour. An early intervention approach was developed based on the need to be active early in the crime cycle in order to build the capacity of families and young people at points fundamental to their development. It is based on both national and international research, components of which have been identified as being successful in the reduction of juvenile offending, for example, the challenging offending behaviours, which all youth workers in the juvenile justice unit in Victoria use and which has been used in the United Kingdom and the Cavan Training Centre in South Australia. TWT takes on the role of community council while also hosting the community development employer program (CDEP), the major employer of Aboriginal people in the region.

TIME EXPIRED

NB: Due to time constraints Liz did not get time to complete this griever, read below for the rest of the griever.

The board is active in issues creating the capacity for Aboriginal people to be self reliant and to have active involvement in the future of their young people. The agency houses and supports the Bush Break Away coordinator.

The Bush Break Away program was initially set up for one year to evaluate its usefulness. Its success to date proves its worth, and the necessity for its continuation.

It is a program that has been specifically designed by local people to meet local needs. It would be nothing short of a disaster if funding for this program was stopped. It would be a severe put down to the Ceduna Aboriginal community if this program were discontinued.

I urge the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation (the Hon Terry Roberts), along with the Premier (the Hon Mike Rann), to ensure that the Ceduna Bush Breakaway Youth Action Program continues to be funded, and funded at a level that makes it possible to expand to meet the need.

The 2002 Budget has not yet been delivered however the Government is releasing a substantial amount of information prior to any of it being put to Parliament or debated in Parliament. I look forward to an announcement that the Ceduna Bush Breakaway Program is not only being continued to be funded but also funded generously.