

Legislative Council

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DRUG EDUCATION

The Hon. A. BRESSINGTON (15:06): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Mental Health and Substance Abuse a question—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. A. BRESSINGTON: Control yourselves—on funding for drug education.

Leave granted.

The Hon. A. BRESSINGTON: I note the minister's interest in the common sleepy lizard and the educational film that was made about it. I commend her for that. I have a submission from a production organisation called Fat Lip whose director is Michael Edgecomb. This organisation wants to produce an educational film for students on Ecstasy. The material states, 'Feel the pain; she's dead because of a drug overdose; left behind a mum, brothers and others.' As I understand it, this is based on the true-life story of a 14-year-old girl who died of an overdose. It is about the friends and family who were left behind.

The reason behind this film is to get the message across to kids that these drugs are dangerous and that they do do harm. The company is seeking assistance to raise about \$280,000 for this film, to be targeted specifically at high school students and other educational outlets. Will the Minister for Mental Health and Substance Abuse give us some indication as to whether the state government is prepared to support such a very important initiative?

The Hon. G.E. GAGO (Minister for Environment and Conservation, Minister for Mental Health and Substance Abuse, Minister Assisting the Minister for Health) (15:07): I thank the honourable member for her question and her ongoing interest in these important policy areas. Indeed, education programs are a very important part of our policy to manage harm minimisation in relation to illicit substances and also potentially harmful substances such as alcohol and cigarette smoking.

We have a number of current education campaigns, and we are just about to launch a very important campaign targeted at youth binge drinking. That will come out fairly soon. The federal government has also put aside funding for a range of advertising and public education programs as well. I am not aware of the particular educational program that the honourable member mentions, but I will be very pleased to look at that more closely if she can give me some details and I will investigate the matter further.

We are always very keen not to reinvent the wheel where we do not have to. We have often borrowed templates from other campaigns from other states and countries and modified them, where appropriate, to meet our own local needs. I am happy to look at that. Obviously, any initiatives that have funding implications will need to be considered in the light of the full budgetary process. However, I will be very pleased to receive the details and investigate it.