

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES — RURAL AND REMOTE COMMUNITIES

1243. Hon LYNN MacLAREN to the Minister for Disability Services:

- (1) What steps is the government taking to meet the special needs of people with disabilities who live in rural and remote communities?
- (2) Would the minister support the establishment of a youth-specific advocacy service for young people with disabilities?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of this question and for asking it in my presence and for giving me the opportunity to respond, which is nice. I know that Hon Lynn MacLaren is very interested in these matters. She might be interested to know that during the lunch break, I was with my Ministerial Advisory Council on Disability, and she will be pleased to know that that group has a number of youthful members. The formal answer to the member's question is —

- (1) The commission's country community support directorate, with a budget of \$11.2 million, has a specific focus on the provision of services and support to people with disabilities and their families living in regional and remote WA. The government continues to provide growth funding to ensure the statewide local area coordination program remains responsive to the needs of people with disabilities living in rural and remote communities.

The disability services country community support directorate provides regional and remote services from 25 offices statewide. The Disability Services Commission has a remote area strategy that is based on ensuring culturally appropriate responsive services are provided to people living in remote areas. Nine projects are currently in operation. A Broome-based respite facility has been announced as part of the current government's election commitment to construct five facilities statewide. An additional rurally based facility is soon to be announced. The Disability Services Commission has just signed a second tri-state disability strategic plan with the Northern Territory and South Australia to provide seamless services to Aboriginal people living in the remote central lands area. The commission's country community support directorate has recently taken an increased role with regional and remote service providers to ensure responsive services for people with disabilities and families living in remote areas.

- (2) No. Disability advocacy services are funded to provide advocacy support across all ages, including youth.