

FORREST GARDENS NURSING HOME

**253. Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN to the Minister for Health:**

I refer to the pay dispute that has resulted in the brand-new, 64-bed Forrest Gardens nursing home in my electorate remaining vacant since April.

- (1) Why has the minister repeatedly refused requests to meet the management of the new facility to help negotiate a speedy resolution to the dispute?
- (2) Why did the minister reject my request to resolve the dispute immediately by directing the Department of Health to pay the additional wages, totalling about \$160 a day, until at least the issue was settled?

**Mr KUCERA replied:**

- (1)-(2) I am pleased that the member for Mitchell asked this question as it is about time this issue was raised in the House. We must look at the contract that was signed that established the new nursing home. One of the clauses was a transmission of business clause. It is, surprisingly, no longer in the contract. The contract was signed by the previous Government and the clause was removed. The lowest-paid people in the health industry are now faced with transferring to the new nursing home and receiving even lower pay. Rather than do that, this Government has employed those people as part of the Bunbury Health Service and it will guarantee the wages of the workers of Bunbury - the member's constituents. They are the lowest-paid workers in the industry. The member said that I had refused to meet with the Moran Health Care Group (WA). I have met with representatives of the group in this Parliament. My staff have met with the Moran Health Care Group on many occasions. We have written to the Moran Health Care Group about settling the issue. In the meantime, the Moran Health Care Group has chosen to implement an arbitration process over the contract. Under the rulings of that arbitration process, it would be inappropriate for me to meet with the group. In fact, that is part of the process and the Moran Health Care Group well knows it. While the dispute continues, it would be most inappropriate to allow the transfer of patients - people who are in desperate need of care and who are receiving excellent care where they are - to premises that are the subject of a dispute where proper care cannot be given. The amount of wages that the preclusion of the clause has denied to the workers is approximately the same amount that the Moran Health Care Group donated to the national Liberal Party last year.

The SPEAKER: Members! When I am on my feet, I expect those who are speaking to desist. It is very difficult to give the call to a member who cannot hear that call. It is important that, when I am on my feet, people do not speak.