

Hon Kim Chance; Deputy President; Hon Helen Morton; Hon Barbara Scott; Mr Vincent Catania; Hon Nigel Hallett; Hon Peter Collier

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### ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE

**HON KIM CHANCE (Agricultural - Leader of the House)** [9.56 pm]: This is the best speech of the day!

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Ken Travers)**: It is very popular at this time!

**Hon KIM CHANCE**: It is indeed. I move -

That the house do now prematurely adjourn.

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT**: The Leader of the House has made himself very popular. Let us see if members can do the same!

#### *Forensic Mental Health Facility - Adjournment Debate*

**HON HELEN MORTON (East Metropolitan)** [9.57 pm]: Not only will I not make myself very popular with the house, but also I will probably not make myself very popular yet again with the Minister for Health. A letter to the minister refers to mental health and states -

... it was a blight on the face of the Western Australian health system and the State Government's service to its citizens.

I will talk a bit more about the author of this letter and some of the reasons she has every right to make that comment. In April 2006, I asked the minister what he was doing about forensic mental health service planning in Western Australia and whether some planning had taken place. He said that a new mental health facility was being considered and that the business case was under preparation. I subsequently found out that the business case had been completed two months earlier. He said also that community consultation would take place when the site had been chosen. I waited for five months before again asking exactly the same question. The response to the question of whether the business case had been completed was that it had. The response to the question of whether it was currently being considered by the government was that the government was considering it but had not made a decision on it yet. I waited another four months and, on 6 December, I asked the minister the same questions again. He was getting a bit short with me at that stage and he responded only in single words. To the question of whether the government had made a determination on the sites recommended in the business case, he said no, not applicable and so on. I waited another five months. On 29 May, I asked whether the government had made a determination on the sites recommended in the business plan, and the response was no. Then I asked for how long the business case had been completed and the minister said that it had been completed in February 2006. Here we are now 19 months later. For 19 months the business case has been prepared but nothing has happened. On 11 September I became aware that a person had sent an email to the executive director of mental health warning that person about growing pressures on forensic mental health services. On 17 September I asked some questions of the Commissioner of the Department of Corrective Services about the number of prisoners with mental health problems. Twenty per cent of them have mental health problems. I also asked the commissioner about the business case that was being done jointly by the Department of Corrective Services and the Department of Health. He made the comment that it was a combined approach between the two departments and that it was completed more than 12 months ago. He made the explicit statement -

The joint business case between the Department of Health and the Department of Corrective Services ... was not approved by the ERC.

That is, the expenditure review committee. He continued -

Our minister instructed the Department of Corrective Services to put up a separate business case through the ERC, which is what we are currently doing.

He went on to state that that was being done both at Bandyup and Hakea prisons. The questions I asked in the estimates committee occurred on 17 September, which was the exact same day that Christine Bruce was stabbed by a forensic mental health patient outside an outpatient clinic. I did not know at the time that that had occurred. A week before that, the executive director for mental health had received an email warning him that the pressures on forensic mental health services were becoming unacceptable. On the day after the hearings with the Department of Corrective Services I asked questions in the house about how many forensic mental health beds were in the system. I received the answer that at that time there were two fewer than in 2001. The number of mental health beds has decreased in that time.

I asked for clarification about what the Commissioner of the Department of Corrective Services had said about the new facilities. I specifically asked the Minister for Health when the expenditure review committee rejected the interagency business case for a new forensic mental health facility. The response I received from the

Hon Kim Chance; Deputy President; Hon Helen Morton; Hon Barbara Scott; Mr Vincent Catania; Hon Nigel Hallett; Hon Peter Collier

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minister was that the expenditure review committee had not rejected the proposal. Subsequently in the question I asked whether the minister could confirm that the executive director of mental health was advised on 11 September - one week prior to the stabbing - of the growing pressure on forensic mental health. The answer I received was a very glib response that there was constant pressure on forensic mental health services. The answer was received two days after the lady had been stabbed.

I asked further questions through the Minister for Regional Development representing the Minister for Corrective Services about whether the business case had been rejected by the expenditure review committee. The response to the question was that, all of a sudden, the expenditure review committee was a subcommittee of cabinet and, as such, all its submissions were in confidence. All of a sudden, the doors had closed and there was no way I was able to continue to get any information about this except through the daughter of Christine Bruce who wrote to many people, including the Leader of the Opposition. In her letter she makes the following clear statement -

My mother sustained 23 wounds inflicted by a sharpened screwdriver to her head, face, abdomen, leg, arms, hand, breast and shoulder.

That attack occurred from a person who had previously been convicted of other attacks, including the stabbing of a nurse in the neck at the Alma Street Centre near Fremantle Hospital, as well as another patient. The offender had been released from the Frankland Centre at Graylands Hospital only five days prior to the attack. The letter goes on to state -

The clinic in which my mother works had repeatedly requested security in the carpark. These requests were denied due to 'lack of funding'.

I happen to know that in that particular financial year community-based mental health services were underspent by \$7 million. She went on -

However, what is frightening is the fact that patients are discharged from Frankland Centre into the community due to lack of available beds, not due to rehabilitation and recovery.

For nearly 20 months the minister has known that there is growing pressure on forensic mental health beds but nothing has happened. He has had a business case for 19 months but no action has been taken. In fact, the expenditure review committee of cabinet rejected the business case and nothing has happened. The letter goes on to state -

The Forensic Health Service has also received no significant increase in funding since 2000/2001, something that is well overdue. Improved funding would not only mean more accommodation but more resources to compensate staff shortages.

...

Furthermore, this attack was more than "worrying" ... it was a blight on the face of the Western Australian health system and the State Government's service to its citizens.

Mr McGinty, with all these facts laid out in front of you, what action are you now going to take to improve forensic mental health care in Western Australia?

I can tell members what Mr McGinty is going to do. He told me what he was going to do. As a result of the attack taking place and the crisis management approach that he has towards mental health - a system that is in total chaos - he provided the following answer to one of my questions -

A temporary security officer - with review for continuation - has been provided to escort staff to and from the building and car park. A security review of building and surrounds has been undertaken. Following the WorkSafe review, the second interview room and treatment room at the clinic are no longer used for patients. The State Forensic Mental Health Service is actively examining the possibility of alternative premises.

It was not until somebody was stabbed more than 23 times that the minister finally made the decision to have a look at something that has been on the cards for over 19 months. It is an absolute disgrace. This is crisis management and a system in chaos.

*Child Protection - Adjournment Debate*

**HON BARBARA SCOTT (South Metropolitan)** [10.07 pm]: I rise this evening in the chamber to make some comments on a very tragic situation that has unfolded in my electorate in the past year, and which has reached a crisis point in this past week. I refer to the tragic death of little Sofia Rodriguez-Urrutia Shu in a shopping centre at the hands of a monster, who has been sentenced this week. I have got to take this opportunity, in the light of the statements that have been made on behalf of Sofia's family and other people, to plead with the Attorney

Hon Kim Chance; Deputy President; Hon Helen Morton; Hon Barbara Scott; Mr Vincent Catania; Hon Nigel Hallett; Hon Peter Collier

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General, Mr McGinty. For goodness' sake, when will Mr McGinty stop the talk and do the walk and protect our little babies and girls and children from gross abuse from monsters who should be in prison?

I have stood many times in this chamber over a number of years promoting the concept of mandatory reporting of child abuse. I pleaded with the government prior to the 2005 election. We made it very clear that we would commit vast sums of money to train professionals working around children to identify incidents and suspicious signs of neglect, physical abuse and sexual abuse.

On behalf of Sofia's parents, a parish priest, Father Rosling - who I know and have spoken with - has called on the state government, and Mr McGinty in particular, to act. He has accused Mr McGinty of caring more about the welfare of prostitutes and paedophiles than the safety of children. Those are the words of Father Rosling, not mine. Those are words that are repeated in the community when we hear day after day, week after week and month after month of horrendous stories of our little babies and girls being mutilated and sexually abused by monsters who are not reported or brought to book.

I support the call by Father Bryan Rosling, and ask why Mr McGinty cannot bring in mandatory reporting of child abuse and ensure that people reporting it do not make vexatious reports. Part of the package that the Liberals have promoted ensures that professionals detect serious suspicion of child abuse and not go down every burrow or look at every broken marriage when a vexatious report might be made. People in this town are trained and know what to look for in a little child as young as six months or three months old. Those people do not have to look at the battered vagina of a baby at six months to know that the baby may have been sexually abused and ruined for life, but the Attorney General in this town makes light of the fact that this is happening daily. Maybe Western Australia will get mandatory reporting in 2009, as was stated in a report in *The West Australian* of 17 July 2007 headed "No mandatory reporting for two more years" - at least. A bill in that regard has not even come into the house yet.

I went back over my files, and the very first question I asked in Parliament this year was as follows -

- (1) When does the minister anticipate that legislation to introduce mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse will be presented to the Parliament?
- (2) Does the minister anticipate a widening of the legislation to include neglect, physical and psychological abuse of children?
- (3) What is the anticipated time frame for the training of professionals, and will this training be phased in; that is, one profession after another?

It could not be expected that all doctors, nurses, teachers, childcare workers and those sorts of people could be trained in a month or in half a year. One profession would need to be done after another. I asked that question on 27 March, and the answer was -

- (1) The government anticipates that the legislation for mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse will be introduced into Parliament in the second half of this calendar year.

I have not gone through the rest of the answer to that question, but that is the key to the Attorney General's motive; that is, he intends to bring in mandatory reporting only of child abuse of children under 13 years whose sexual abuse results in a sexually transmitted infection. For those children who are sexually abused or violently abused or neglected and will carry that abuse for the rest of their lives, this government intends to do nothing, yet the government maintains that it cares for children. A monster who has committed previous crimes was sentenced this week for Sofia's horrendous death in a public toilet in a shopping centre in my electorate. On radio on Friday morning, the spokesperson for the family asked Mr McGinty what he will do about it: "Will you bring in mandatory reporting?" Mr McGinty said, "I will take it to the highest place. It is a very serious issue." I then put out a media statement asking, "Okay, Mr McGinty, how high can you go other than the Parliament? How much higher can you go?" If Mr McGinty is genuine, a very well researched and well-drafted bill has been put in the Legislative Assembly by the Liberal Party - I did the work on that measure. However, this government has set up a committee on the matter. Mr McGinty treats with utter contempt any questions about this. Today I asked -

- (1) Has the government established a committee to examine mandatory reporting of child abuse?
- (2) If so, who are the members of the committee?
- (3) Has the committee reported to the minister or the government?
- (4) If so, will the minister table the report?

What answer did I get? I was told on 27 March that the government had decided to legislate for mandatory reporting of sexual abuse and would review the legislation and put in a time frame, a process and a costing for

Hon Kim Chance; Deputy President; Hon Helen Morton; Hon Barbara Scott; Mr Vincent Catania; Hon Nigel Hallett; Hon Peter Collier

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training. The government stated that a thorough educative process would be undertaken, and the training program would be developed by an interagency working group. I ask Mr McGinty, who is a lawyer with a good vocabulary, the following: for the benefit of people in the community, what is the difference between a working party and a committee? For goodness' sake! I asked my first question for this year in March, and today I get this absolutely nonsense answer that there is not a committee, but a working group is providing legislative input. I asked whether there is a report and, if so, what it says. I am provided no answers because the questions are not applicable because the body is not a committee! That is unacceptable. I have to say that tonight in half the Aboriginal communities in this state, the house knows that little babies and girls will be sexually abused because this government has not acted sufficiently quickly to protect them.

I took this picture out of the newspaper a week or so ago. I hold it up for everybody to see. Look at that woman lying on that mattress. Look at that little baby in the napkin. Will she be the woman lying on the mattress in 15 years or less, probably drunk, drugged and disorderly because she has been neglected or violently abused under this regime of the McGinty government? She is a tiny child in a napkin standing there bewildered. That picture says a thousand words.

I plead with this government to hear and listen to the Aboriginal women and leaders in these communities. The government should listen to people like Professor Fiona Stanley, who has done enormous amounts of research into Aboriginal communities to try to build capacity into them, to make them strong and to build their spirit so they can withstand the conditions in which they have to live. However, they need legislative background, they need resources and they need refuges for the mothers and babies in these communities. Does this house have to stand by and see a repeat of Sofia's death?

*Nicholas Jackson Catania - Adjournment Debate*

**HON VINCENT CATANIA (Mining and Pastoral)** [10.17 pm]: Tonight, I rise to thank both sides of the house for the well wishes that people have given Johanna and I on the birth of our son, Nicholas Jackson Catania, who was born on 25 October this year. He was seven weeks premature, and I want to inform the house that both Johanna and Nicholas arrived home today after three weeks in hospital and a lot of trips to and from the hospital. He weighs over two kilos. When he was first born he was only 1.7 kilos, so he has done quite well to get out of hospital so early. I thank everyone for their well wishes, and I also want to thank the staff at King Edward Memorial Hospital, who handle these situations so well. I cannot speak highly enough about the care that we received. I particularly refer to the care received by other parents who were less fortunate than us and have had premature kids, some at 23 and 24 weeks. I thank the staff for the care they gave Johanna and Nicholas. I also again thank both sides of the house for their well wishes; they were gratefully received. I hope Nicholas grows up to be a strong little kid.

*Regional Development Commissions - Adjournment Debate*

**HON NIGEL HALLETT (South West)** [10.18 pm]: I want to make a few brief comments on the publication of the annual reports of the nine regional development commissions. The variance between the reports is quite remarkable. Many questions must be asked about the variances, and in many cases it is a story of wasted opportunity of both resources and money to improve life in regional Western Australia. I will briefly review the annual reports in reaching my conclusion that they should encapsulate the social structure, strengths and weaknesses, economic conditions and trends of the various regions. The sad part is that few deliver very well on this, and some deliver hardly at all. It is a great pity, because the nine reports present an opportunity to convey so much about 98 per cent of the land area of our state and 25 per cent of its population. Most importantly, the regions are the greatest income providers in the state, through minerals and agriculture.

I have no wish to stifle individuality, but each of the nine commissions - all formed under the same act of Parliament - should at least have similar formats and reporting standards so that meaningful comparisons can be made between the performance of each. Currently, this is not possible. Although some provide information on area, population, gross regional product and unemployment, some do not. The Peel Development Commission produces a five-page report on significant issues and trends that is clear and easy to read. In a short time, the reader has an understanding of what makes the region tick, where it is going and what problems it faces. Compared with this, some of the reports of the other development commissions contain virtually no information, leaving the reader unable to understand the region. The annual report should be a major opportunity for each regional development commission to sell its region, supplemented by more specifically targeted publicity. Is it not time that the formats of the annual reports were harmonised?

I hoped that, when it came to efficiency indicators, each report would be made on the same basis. Six use the same parameters and three do not. Six development commissions report on the cost per hour of their services as an efficiency indicator, and the other three use the cost per project. I think that it would make sense to

standardise these. How else can the ministers - bear in mind that there are several of them - really know how efficient the commissions are and whether the public is receiving value for money for its investment. The cost-per-hour basis is by far the better gauge for measuring efficiency. The project method can be unduly influenced by political interference from people other than the minister for the region deciding where money may be spent, particularly leading up to an election. The figures are quite interesting for those commissions that stand up to be counted. The most efficient is the Peel Development Commission. It provides two figures - one for each of its services - and the range is \$49.54 to \$53.44; an average of around \$51, although this is a guess on the mix of the two services. Second most efficient is Goldfields-Esperance, at \$89.50; then the Wheatbelt Development Commission at \$97.35; Gascoyne at \$115; South West at \$182; and Kimberley at \$236. There is a huge disparity, if the calculations are prepared on the same basis. What is being done to make sure that the poorer performers are made more efficient? What are the individual ministers for each region and the Minister for Regional Development doing about it? Does anyone in the government know, or really care? I am sufficiently concerned about this matter to place questions on notice to the various ministers responsible, asking whether those development commissions that currently choose not to report on this basis can provide this information.

Another area of concern is the annual audit of the development commissions. Public companies are required to change their auditors on a regular basis. This is done to ensure complete independence; the auditor should not be close to the company and the people within it. Also, maximum value for money is obtained through competitive tendering. Does this happen in the development commissions? In 2006, the Auditor General audited all but one - the Peel Development Commission. Audit fees ranged from \$35 000 for the Goldfields-Esperance Development Commission, which was the most expensive, to \$15 500 for the Wheatbelt Development Commission, which was the cheapest. One must ask: why the difference? The wheatbelt and goldfields incoming cash flows were almost identical at just over \$2 million. The wheatbelt staff comprise 14 full-time equivalents against 12 for the goldfields. I question whether the government has inquired why; and, if so, what is the answer. That is another question I will be putting on notice, asking how to implement a policy of tendering for audit; and, if that cannot be done, why not. Whilst considering value for money, it seems to me that a thorough review is required of the staffing levels and seniority of public servants in the major posts. Why does it take 12 full-time equivalent staff to run the Gascoyne Development Commission serving a population of approximately 9 000 when Peel manages with 1.5 full-time equivalents more to serve a population of approximately 96 000? There is then the question of the South West Development Commission employing 25 full-time employees when no-one else employs more than 15.

Salary differentials are great too. One would think that all the heads of development commissions would fall within the same pay scale but they do not. One head of a development commission receives, according to audited accounts, \$168 587 while the head of another receives in the range of \$100 000 to \$110 000. The question is: why is one paid 50 per cent more than the other? Are they on the same public service pay scale? This question is left unanswered. The state has nine regional development commissions, some of which seem to have wandered off more or less to carry out their own agenda. There is no commonality of reporting on the annual reviews or efficiency, and the information that does exist throws up an enormous disparity. It appears that little is done to control costs; for example, audit costs and staffing and pay scales appear to be out of control. However, the most worrying point is that this situation has existed for some years and no-one in this current government has done anything about it.

*Professional Teaching Council of Western Australia Awards – Adjournment Debate*

**HON PETER COLLIER (North Metropolitan)** [10.27 pm]: I am pleased to say that on 25 October 2007 I was one of the guest speakers at the inaugural Outstanding Professional Service Awards and Media Award conducted by the Professional Teaching Council of Western Australia. It was an extremely rewarding and enjoyable experience, recognising the outstanding service of a number of teachers who work in Western Australian schools. I commend the Professional Teaching Council on this initiative. I particularly acknowledge the efforts of the president, Anne Tumak, and executive officer Pauline Tremlett for their hard work. I will briefly draw from the program for the evening. The objectives of the PTCWA are as follows -

- To promote professionalism in teaching through an enhancement of the work of professional education associations
- To provide a wider context for the work of professional education associations through facilitation of networking and communication between individual associations
- To provide a forum for the discussion of broad educational thought and current issues
- To improve communication between associations and other agencies, both government and non-government

- To facilitate the co-ordination of shared resourcing and joint planning for members
- To organise such meetings, professional learning and professional development activities, so as to meet the needs of the members and to raise the profile of professional educators and professional education associations in the general community

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PTCWA is the state council representing peak bodies of the professional education associations in Western Australia. It provides a state voice for West Australian teachers and educators in ALL systems.

Our work provides value to the community, ensuring ongoing support for the profession while developing quality teaching and leadership.

PTCWA is an umbrella body of over 50 associations of professional educators in W.A. These voluntary professional education associations represent over 25,000 educators in:

- ALL systems and sectors
  - Early Childhood
  - Primary
  - Secondary
  - Tertiary (including TAFE)
  - Adult Learning
- In all curriculum and specialist areas
- Cross curricula areas  
(e.g. ESL, Teacher Librarians)
- Leadership and school administration

As you can see, Mr Deputy President (Hon Ken Travers), this association represents teachers and all of the associations that represent specific areas of expertise within the teaching fraternity.

I acknowledge the following people for their hard work and for receiving awards in the following categories: Commemorative Award to Ms Mary-Jane Whithead; Commemorative Award to Dr Marie Martin; Certificate of Appreciation to Dr Robyn White, who is the principal of Perth Modern School; and the Media Award to Mr Hugh Mackay. The Outstanding Service Award went to Reverend Ted Witham, from the Australian Association for Religious Education; Ms Stephanie Gaunt, from the Australian Association for Special Education; Ms Thelma Cluning, from the Art Education Association of Western Australia; Mr Alec Kanganas, from the Australian Literacy Educators Association; Dr Stephan Millett, from the Association for Philosophy in Schools; Mr Kent Miller Logie, from the Australian Society for Music Education; Ms Dell Trainer, from Business Educators of Western Australia; and Mr Mike Callaghan, from the Design and Technology Teachers Association. Further recipients of awards were Mary Vадja, Early Childhood Teachers' Association; Viola Galatis, Early Years in Education Society; Lachlan McKinnon, Geographical Association of Western Australia; Noemi Reynolds, Mathematical Association of WA; Clare Buising, Modern Language Teachers Association of Western Australia; Ros Marshall, Political and Legal Educators Association; Val Baird, Professional Teaching Council of Western Australia; Donna Brandes, Regional Association for Student Centred Learning; Geoff Lewis, Science Teachers' Association of Western Australia; Fulvia Valasori, Western Australian Association of Teachers of Italian; Jenny Cole, Western Australian Education Support Principals' Association; Susan Beltman, Western Australian Institute for Educational Research; Anette Ainsworth, Western Australian School Library Association; Belinda Stewart, Western Australian Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages; and Karen Bailey, Westralian Indonesian Language Teachers' Association.

As I said, I congratulate all the recipients of these awards, and the Professional Teaching Council for its initiative in recognising excellence in the teaching profession. The teaching fraternity definitely needs strong advocacy and representation. Groups such as the Professional Teaching Council of Western Australia provide such advocacy through the umbrella organisations that constitute this organisation. It is a shame that the Professional Teaching Council does not receive any state funding. Groups such as this need funds to operate and engage teachers and to provide services to teachers. I think it would be a very good initiative for the government to provide some funding to this organisation. As a former member of the Political and Legal Educators Association and the History Teachers Association, I can swear by the value of these organisations in providing support services and assistance to teachers, particularly new graduates. I wish the PTC and each of the associations

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p6928b-6933a

Hon Kim Chance; Deputy President; Hon Helen Morton; Hon Barbara Scott; Mr Vincent Catania; Hon Nigel Hallett; Hon Peter Collier

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under its umbrella every success. The role these associations play in supporting and promoting teachers should never be underestimated. I commend their tremendously valued efforts.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 10.32 pm*

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