

DISABILITY SERVICES, SMS AND MSN SERVICES FOR THE DEAF

370. Mr A.J. Simpson to the Minister for Disability Services

I refer to the expense, poor mobility and limited ownership of TTY machines and the extremely positive response that my innovative and very cost effective SMS and MSN constituent services have attracted from the Western Australian Deaf Community, and ask -

- (a) will the Minister establish the same services in the Minister's Ministerial and Electorate offices; and
 - (i) if not, why;
- (b) will the Minister advise all Government Departments within the Ministry for Disability Services to offer similar services for their clients; and
 - (i) if not, why; and
- (c) will the Minister advise the Government to fund an SMS service so that all Members of Parliament can offer services to deaf and hard-of-hearing constituents via their mobile phone; and
 - (i) if not, why?

Mr R.C. KUCERA replied:

The Western Australian Disability Services Act (1993) requires state government agencies and local governments to develop and implement a disability service plan, to ensure people with disabilities have equitable access to services provided by public authorities. As new technologies develop, it is appropriate that agencies explore new options not covered in the existing plans. The emergence of MSN and SMS technology allows government agencies to further develop their disability services plan and ensure better access for all clients with access to this technology. I am happy to progress the Member's suggestion in a bipartisan way.