

COMMUNITY DRUG SUMMIT

Mr O'GORMAN to the Minister for Health:

I refer the minister to yesterday's release of the final three Community Drug Summit issues papers. Will the minister update the House on the progress in organising the Community Drug Summit?

Mr KUCERA replied:

I thank the member for Joondalup for his question, and I note the member's keen involvement in the Drug Summit discussions. I advise members on the other side of the House, particularly in the left-hand corner, that it is very difficult to hear because of the level of interjection.

I was very pleased that yesterday, the final three issues papers for the Drug Summit were released. One of the papers referred to drugs in the Aboriginal community. I advise the member for Kimberley that the Government will be proceeding with the replacement of the health clinic at Balgo mission, which will cost approximately \$1.5 million. That may also interest the member for Pilbara. That paper raised a very important issue about drugs in the Aboriginal community.

The Community Drug Summit was a key commitment by the Labor Party in the lead-up to the state election, and I am pleased to inform the House of the implementation of yet another election commitment by the Gallop Government. Planning is well under way, and the secretariat is well established. The co-chairs have been appointed - Fred Chaney and Liz Harman - along with a remarkable young woman, Jade, who will represent the youth in the community. Nine issues papers have now been released to form the basis of community consultations and submissions. I compliment a member in another place, Hon Simon O'Brien, for his involvement on behalf of the Opposition. I also commend the serious way in which he views the Drug Summit, as opposed to the disparaging remarks made yesterday by the member for Mitchell. Hon Simon O'Brien did not make a joke about the Drug Summit, as did the member for Mitchell yesterday about the Deaf Society of WA.

Extensive community consultations have taken place. Applications for the 80 delegates that will be selected from the community have closed. It will be difficult to choose those delegates, because 1 000 applications have been received. I believe that reflects the level of interest and concern that people have about the seriousness of this summit.

Mr Speaker, I compliment you and your staff on the way you have approached the use of this Chamber for this summit, to be held between 13 and 17 August. The arrangements are now being finalised. I hope that at long last the summit will provide the opportunity for all sides of this debate to speak on this matter, and to form clear policy and a sensible mandate to deal with drug issues within this State. The full range of issues dealing with the use of illicit drugs in our community has been canvassed, and the summit will present the Government - and, indeed, the Opposition - with an opportunity to take a bipartisan approach to what is one of the most serious issues of this day.