DERBY HEALTH SUMMIT

Statement by Minister for Health

MR R.C. KUCERA (Yokine - Minister for Health) [2.13 pm]: I wish to make a statement on the Derby health summit, but before I do I note with a great deal of sadness the passing of Rex Joyner, the previous chief executive officer of Royal Perth Hospital. Rex Joyner made an outstanding contribution to health in this State, and I am sure every member in this Chamber joins with me in passing on our condolences to his family. He was an outstanding Western Australian.

On Sunday I addressed a health summit in Derby that was held to discuss the changes that had been made to the delivery of health services in the Kimberley. The meeting had a number of very positive outcomes. It also gave me an opportunity to dispel a number of inaccurate claims that had been made about the changes. Derby Regional Hospital and Numbala Nunga Nursing Home are not closing. In fact, Derby hospital's in-patient units will be redeveloped and Numbala Nunga Nursing Home will be completely rebuilt in a culturally appropriate manner.

The way forward for Derby now lies in the hands of the local community. I strongly urged all Derby residents to make their views heard by making submissions to the working party chaired by shire president, Elsia Archer, and headed by the member for Kimberley, Carol Martin, and the member for the Mining and Pastoral Region, Hon Jon Ford.

The decision to move the regional base for health services in the Kimberley was made with the health of the region in mind. It is much easier to attract staff to Broome than it is to Derby, which is one of the main reasons we made this decision. Far too many people in the Kimberley end up in hospital for conditions that could have been prevented if detected earlier. Our strong focus must be on primary and community health, prevention and early detection. This Government remains committed to improving the health outcomes for all Western Australians.