

COMMUNITY DRUG SUMMIT, GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE

443. Mr HYDE to the Minister for Health:

At the very successful Community Drug Summit, the minister gave a commitment that the Government would respond to the recommendations of the summit. Could the minister update the House on the preparation of the Government's response to the summit?

Mr KUCERA replied:

I thank the member for Perth for the question and for the amount of work he does in his electorate on this issue, particularly as much of the drug activity is often centred around the city area. The use of illicit drugs and their impact on society is one of the greatest challenges facing our community today. Almost every family in Western Australia has either known or been touched in some way by this scourge of drug use and addiction. That is why the Government made a commitment to organise a community drug summit as a way of defining and developing the community's priorities for the Government when tackling this significant challenge. I want to emphasise the point about the community. It was the Community Drug Summit, not a National Party drug summit, Labor Party drug summit or Liberal Party drug summit. This Government firmly believes that if everybody in the community works together, we will develop and deliver the appropriate range of policies and programs that will keep our young people alive.

I am sure that members who took the time to attend the Community Drug Summit and listened to the community members who attended will recall the enormous degree of cooperation and goodwill that emanated from the summit. It was developed among the delegates of the summit during the week. They all worked together to define what are the main priorities for this Government, with a genuine spirit of commitment and a true belief in the need for a unified and cooperative bipartisan approach to meeting the challenges ahead. This Government believes that we owe it to the summit, the delegates and the wider community to maintain that cooperation and goodwill. For that reason, the Government has decided to delay announcing its responses.

Mr Barnett: We will deliver, we will act!

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Barnett: The non-performing, hapless Minister for Health.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the Leader of the Opposition to order for the first time.

Mr KUCERA: When I came into this House eight months ago, I expected a level of statesmanship. The Leader of the Opposition reminds me of a saying in a novel by George Eliot called *Adam Bede*.

Mr Johnson: Will you read it?

Mr KUCERA: I certainly will read it to the member for Hillarys, because I would like to get it right. The author wrote, "He was like a cock who thought the sun had risen to hear him crow." That describes the attitude of the man the member considers to be his leader.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr KUCERA: Let me move on, if I may. This issue is too important to become a political football to be kicked around in this and other places. Opposition members in this House are determined that the outcomes of the Community Drug Summit will become a political football and be bogged down in the heat of a federal election. This Government will not allow that. We will stand up for those good people and not allow that to happen.