

**ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE**

**HON NORMAN MOORE (Mining and Pastoral — Leader of the House)** [10.00 pm]: I move —

That the house do now adjourn.

*Revive Clinic — Adjournment Debate*

**HON HELEN MORTON (East Metropolitan — Parliamentary Secretary)** [10.01 pm]: In my contribution to the Address-in-Reply debate I spent some time speaking about the nursing shortage in Western Australia and how it had affected my family. I also spoke about the need to embrace new forms of health workers, particularly nurse practitioners, and how that could be encouraged throughout Western Australia.

In the same week I was asked to give the opening address at Curtin University of Technology's school of nursing and midwifery leadership celebrations. The theme of that celebration was mental health and nurse practitioners. Curtin University has the largest cohort of nurse practitioner trainees in Australia, with just over 130 people enrolled, of whom eight are mental health nurses. Professor Phillip Della, the head of school at Curtin University's school of nursing and midwifery, wrote to me after the event and said, in part —

The early results of a National Research Study, of which I am a Chief Investigator, into the effectiveness of Nurse Practitioner has indicated that Western Australia is well positioned for growth in the numbers and speciality areas. The mental health speciality represents the second highest cohort of Nurse Practitioners in Australia.

He offered to send me the research when it is completed.

In the following week I helped to launch a nurse practitioner community-based clinic, the first of its kind in Australia, called Revive Clinic, which is based at the Garden City Shopping Centre. People do not need to make an appointment. It is open seven days a week, with extended opening hours. At the Revive Clinic experienced nurse practitioners treat a wide range of minor illness for which they prescribe medication. They handle simple procedures; for example, respiratory conditions, such as colds, flu, coughs, sinus infections, sore throats et cetera; headaches, earaches and ear infections; skin infections, such as rashes, lice, cold sores, sunburn, ringworm et cetera; and digestive and urinary tract infections et cetera. They are the kinds of minor illness issues they can deal with. They also provide other services, such as screening for high blood pressure and giving immunisations. Any patient with an abnormal reading from a screening is referred to a doctor, and the nurses are able to make the referrals directly to doctors. It is the first time that nurse practitioners have been utilised effectively in Australia in this manner. I believe that the future trend will be for the establishment of more of these clinics.

In the past, the majority of nurse practitioners have worked in fairly limited roles in public hospitals because they have not had access to the Medicare benefits scheme or the pharmaceutical benefits scheme. The Revive Clinic is well positioned for nurse practitioners to receive MBS and PBS provider numbers, and that would mean that their patients would be eligible for a Medicare rebate. Members might not be aware that state legislation allows nurse practitioners to diagnose, prescribe and refer within defined Department of Health approval protocols.

The Revive Clinic will help to address the general practitioner shortage by delivering accessible consumer health awareness, disease prevention and health risk management strategies. The Revive Clinic nurse practitioner provides an experience that is patient focused in preventing and managing illnesses.

Revive Clinics are the way of the future and there are plans to open a further 20 clinics around the country. Each clinic will be located in high traffic shopping areas and will have extended opening hours, thus offering a convenience to their patients. The clinic has received encouraging and supportive feedback from the federal minister on further funding for nurses to complete Masters programs and a commitment to provide nurse practitioners with the provider numbers to access the MBS and PBS as part of the primary healthcare strategy.

At the opening, the clinic director, Louise Stewart, indicated that they were also opening clinics in regional centres and hoped to shortly open clinics in Port Hedland and Kalgoorlie.

I am sure that we will see more Revive Clinics in the future. The clinic at Garden City Shopping Centre is the first such nurse practitioner clinic in Australia. I support the establishment of community-based clinics provided by nurse practitioners that will come into their own when the federal government makes changes around access to provider numbers for MBS and PBS.

*Noel Crichton-Browne Petition — Adjournment Debate*

**HON ANTHONY FELS (Agricultural)** [10.07 pm]: I wish to make a couple of remarks about the comments I made in the adjournment debate last Thursday about the Noel Crichton-Browne petition. I disputed some of the evidence that was provided in that petition that was represented as "Statements of Fact", which was attached to

the petition as an affidavit. I wish to clarify something that I said, and I refer to last Thursday's *Hansard* as follows —

The only discussions I have had with him have been in relation to the iron ore policy, and proposing an inquiry in the interests of the state. That was my only motivation. It was certainly not for any personal benefit to Noel Crichton-Browne or Cazaly. I did not pursue this for his benefit, for that of the lawyers assisting him, or for Cazaly or anybody else who was employing him to do so. I pursued this issue purely because I believe it to be worthy for the state of Western Australia to pursue, and I am still of that opinion.

I should have prefaced my remarks by saying that I was referring to the issue of the state iron ore policy. What is reported in *Hansard* is not correct, because, in the 20 years that I have been a member of the Liberal Party, I have at times had discussions with Noel Crichton-Browne on issues other than the iron ore policy. The statement I made was in relation to the iron ore policy, and what I should have said is that the only discussions I have had with him in relation to the state's iron ore policy, and proposing an inquiry, were in the best interests of the state. I apologise if I did not say what I intended to say.

*Transport of Australians from Thailand — Adjournment Debate*

**Hon ANTHONY FELS:** I also want to refer to the evacuation of Australians out of Thailand because of the crisis in that country. I congratulate the Australian government, the Australian Embassy in Thailand and Qantas, which, I understand, has already brought passengers from Thailand back to Australia. I am aware that at short notice Australians in Bangkok were organised onto seven coaches out of Bangkok and transferred to Phuket. I know one of the passengers involved in that transfer. He had recently returned from Mumbai. I tried to contact him on Sunday. I was concerned that he might have been in Mumbai because he often travels there. However, he was stranded in Bangkok. When I spoke to him he could not speak highly enough of the Australian agencies, the pm]: The Iron Ore Processing (Mineralogy Pty. Ltd.) Agreement Amendment Bill refers to one of the largest magnetite operations, if not the largest magnetite operation, to be developed in Australia. The bilet to Singapore where they were accommodated last night in a five-star hotel and flown to Australia today by Qantas. He has not been asked to contribute anything to the cost of that; I am not sure whether that will occur. It has been an extraordinary effort by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, other government agencies and Qantas airlines. I must declare that I have some shares in Qantas, but that is not why I congratulate it; I just think it has gone well out of its way to help, in cooperation with the federal government. It is great to know that when Australians are travelling overseas and possibly get caught up in such a circumstance, the Australian government is there to help.

*Multiperil Crop Insurance — Adjournment Debate*

**HON NIGEL HALLETT (South West)** [10.10 pm]: Tonight I wish to bring to the house's attention the impact that frost has had on a large part of the state's grain growing areas. Some half a million to three-quarters of a million tonnes of grain have been lost. This estimate was provided by Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd, the state's major grain handler. Some of the growers have had 90 per cent losses; there is disappointment now after the prospect of an excellent harvest and some reasonable grain prices.

With today's high cost of growing grain and the high prices of fertiliser, chemicals and machinery, the ballpark figure is about \$1 million of expenditure for every 10 000 acres of planted crop. This risk factor has become a major concern among growers. A Western Australian grain grower can insure for fire and hail at a relatively low cost, but it varies from shire to shire. Unfortunately, there is no avenue available for growers to insure against frost. Many countries around the world, such as Canada, the United States, Italy and Spain, to name just a few, have what is called multiperil crop insurance. Multiperil crop insurance is one process that would allow growers to better manage their own risk. This type of insurance would cover the period from crop establishment through to harvest.

The local multiperil crop insurance study was done in 2001, and the then minister, Hon Kim Chance, allocated \$2.5 million to study the feasibility of introducing an MPCl scheme in Western Australia. The outcome indicated that the proposed MPCl scheme would not be viable without considerable government assistance. When we consider the exceptional circumstances assistance that is available during drought conditions and the method by which it is administered to farmers in exceptional circumstances declared areas, we find that farmers who did not receive any financial support generated higher incomes, had higher off-farm investments to draw on, and earned more from a farm wage and salary than did their counterparts who received emergency relief. The current exceptional circumstances system rewards rather than discourages poor performance and lack of preparation. I believe it is important to revisit the multiperil crop insurance model. Maintaining the viability of farmers is critical to the state's secondary industry and rural commodities. The concept of multiperil crop insurance certainly needs revisiting in light of the increased pressures on agriculture since 2001.

Funding the MPCCI is achievable if funds from the exceptional circumstances scheme are redirected and if other state government schemes are directed away from the minor drought assistance scheme. The initial fund could be set up through these funds, and assistance would be available to those who want to be covered in this way. There should be no compulsion for growers to pay levies or to join; it would be done purely on a commercial basis. From a grower's point of view, the level of coverage could vary. A grower could have 60 per cent coverage, which would cover the initial cost to the grower. A figure of about \$5 a hectare, coupled with funds from government schemes, would provide a base on which to start a scheme for those growers who want to participate. Preliminary inquiries of growers indicate that there is certainly a will to look at this.

From a banking perspective, the security that a bank's client would have with coverage of his cropping program would certainly lead to lower margins on the level of interest that a client has to pay. A lot of the costs of disasters cannot be measured—financial pressures, social costs, impacts on the family unit, family breakdowns and the high suicide rate in rural Western Australia. With the growth in production levels from 2001 to 2008 and a 20 million tonne crop certainly not far away, the economies of scale make the multiperil crop insurance a reality. The people who draft this type of policy would have some scope to work within. I believe it has to be revisited sooner rather than later. The task force that was formed should go back over it, look at the premiums that would be needed and take into account the redirection of government funds. The exit packages, interest subsidies and relief payments that are incorporated in the exceptional circumstances relief could go a long way towards kicking off this fund. I will certainly bring to the attention of the Minister for Agriculture and Food the issue of revisiting multiperil crop insurance.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 10.16 pm*

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