

NEW HEALTH FACILITIES, PEMBERTON-NORTHCLIFFE, NANNUP AND KUKERIN

Statement by Minister for Health

MR KUCERA (Yokine - Minister for Health) [12.21 pm]: It gives me a great deal of pleasure to announce today that three new facilities have been developed to provide first-class medical services to the people of Pemberton-Northcliffe, Nannup and Kukerin.

Last week, I officially opened a \$550 000 health centre at Kukerin. The centre offers emergency services, pathology, immunisation clinics and home nursing care. Residents can also access outpatient clinics, a mental health nurse, school health services, child health clinic, health promotion and prevention programs and home and community care programs. Previously, the residents of Kukerin had to travel to a larger centre to access these kinds of services. Now, they are available in their own town. A welcome spin-off from the new centre has been the ability of the town to attract and retain staff. Since opening, the Kukerin Health Service has been able to attract allied health professionals to the new centre because of the working environment it offers.

Also last week, the State Government opened new multi-purpose health centres in Pemberton-Northcliffe and Nannup - representing a \$7 million investment in the region. I recognise the involvement of the former Government in making these facilities a reality and I acknowledge in particular the Member for Warren-Blackwood, who was a driving force behind their development. Pemberton's new \$5 million centre is state-of-the-art and is on a par with similar facilities in the metropolitan area. It includes eight observation-acute beds, four residential aged care beds, and an emergency service and minor procedures room. Given that 10 per cent of the local population is over the age of 65, home help programs and other programs that help the ageing population retain their independence are obviously highly beneficial. The presence of four aged care beds will mean that long-time residents of Pemberton and Northcliffe will not be forced to move to Manjimup to access appropriate accommodation and care.

A further \$1.9 million was spent on the redevelopment of the Nannup Hospital, allowing for more community-based services to be offered from the one location. The redevelopment has included the upgrade of the accident and emergency facilities, a new ambulance entry and new front entry and reception area.

I thank Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich MLC, the parliamentary secretary for health, for opening the new facilities together with the member for Warren-Blackwood. All three facilities reflect the State Government's approach to providing all Western Australians with access to quality health services. In this year's budget, rural health services received an overall eight per cent increase in funding, which is a reflection of the Government's commitment to rural health.