

FRESH START RECOVERY PROGRAM

Statement by Member for Southern River

MR P. ABETZ (Southern River) [12.57 pm]: Whenever we hear about a drug addict snatching an old lady's handbag to fund their drug habit, we want the offender locked up and the key thrown away. However, there is one person in our city who does not want to throw away the key. In fact, he has unlocked the doorway to a new way forward. This person could be living a very comfortable life but instead has invested an enormous amount of personal time, energy and finances in reaching out to help drug addicts. In 2010 his organisation helped 891 people with addictions on their journey to recovery and detoxed 585 patients. Some 365 people received supported accommodation after receiving treatment, 488 people were provided with counselling and 118 people were provided with mental health support. These figures are just the tip of the iceberg of a truly remarkable and inspirational story. It is the story of the Fresh Start Recovery program and its founder, Dr George O'Neil. Under the watchful eye of chief executive officer, Mr Jeff Cloughton, every cent received from government and donations is used to great effect. Fresh Start has a team of highly qualified and motivated people who share Dr O'Neil's dream of assisting people who are ensnared by the drug culture. On Saturday *The West Australian* published an article by Colleen Egan in which she wrote about the help that he has given.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 to 2.00 pm