

CORONAVIRUS — POST-QUARANTINE TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

Statement

HON TJORN SIBMA (North Metropolitan) [5.23 pm]: Members might recall that yesterday, I raised the issue of the situation facing a number of Western Australian residents who are seeking to return to the state and are now serving out their final days of mandatory quarantine at the Howard Springs facility in the Northern Territory. I do not want to make too much additional commentary other than to say that there is a glimmer of hope that they may be able to depart the Northern Territory on 4 December because they have, of their own volition, persuaded the carrier Airnorth to put on an additional service. Should there be any complications, I have been reliably advised by the Western Australian government, which I want to commend for its work on this issue, that it is prepared to be a bit more nimble and flexible and to expand the window of opportunity to 24 hours so that they will not be in breach of their obligation to remain effectively quarantined from the rest of the Northern Territory population before they make their way to Western Australia. I am advised that the authorities in the Northern Territory who administer the facility at Howard Springs may well also be a little more flexible and potentially grant, if it is so required, an additional night's accommodation—I use that in a very euphemistic sense—in a quarantine facility to ensure that, in whatever circumstances, those Western Australians will be able to return to Western Australia without having to serve an additional two weeks of quarantine after they have already served a fortnight away.

This outcome is, I think, an indication of this chamber working particularly well. I want to commend a member who is absent from the chamber on urgent parliamentary business; I will not embarrass him. I certainly commend the Minister for Police's office, the Western Australia Police Force and all the Western Australian authorities that have worked with their Northern Territory counterparts. I want to underscore that those Western Australians in the Northern Territory have been also the architects of their own release. I also take this opportunity to congratulate Airnorth for putting on a service to get our brothers and sisters home in time for Christmas.

House adjourned at 5.25 pm
