

**REMOTE ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES — MEDICAL TREATMENT —
MEET-AND-GREET SERVICE**

Statement

HON KYLE MCGINN (Mining and Pastoral) [9.56 pm]: As a member for the Mining and Pastoral Region, my electorate covers over two million square kilometres and includes many remote Aboriginal communities, including 221 communities in the Kimberley, 24 communities in the Pilbara and 18 in the goldfields.

For those needing to travel to Perth for treatment, we recognise that it can sometimes be a daunting and intimidating experience, especially for those from remote communities, those for whom English may be their second language and those who may have never travelled to Perth before, let alone been to a tertiary hospital. At the last election, the Labor Party made an election commitment of a meet-and-greet service for Aboriginal people from remote communities visiting Perth for medical treatment. People are welcomed by an Aboriginal person on arrival at the airport or train station and taken to either their accommodation—normally one of the Aboriginal hostels such as Allawah Grove Hostel or Derbal Bidjar Hostel—or to their medical appointment directly, which helps to reduce anxiety associated with the trip. This service reduces non-attendance at medical appointments and improves the cultural safety of health services. That is why the McGowan government will provide \$1.9 million over four years in the current state budget to deliver our election commitment to expand the meet-and-greet service to operate extra hours, so that eligible patients can be met on arrival in Perth and taken to their accommodation.

Country Health Connect has been running a limited meet-and-greet service that operates on weekdays between 8.30 am and 2.30 pm. Sadly, demand for this service often exceeds the ability to provide a culturally safe service. That results in the use of taxis, or worse, patients from remote communities arriving at the airport and being stranded with no-one to pick them up and no guidance on how to get to their accommodation or their medical appointment.

I am pleased to report that progress has been made on phasing in an expanded meet-and-greet service to give better hours of coverage to better align with flight and other arrival times. The first phase of this expansion has started. An extra Aboriginal health driver started on 13 November, enabling service times to increase from 8.00 am to 2.30 pm to 12 hours a day from 6.00 am to 6.00 pm when there is demand. It is intended that these hours of service will further increase when there is staffing capacity. I think the McGowan government is delivering a great service that will help people who need the service.