

RURAL HEALTH SERVICES

589. Mr MURRAY to the Minister for Health:

Will the minister explain to the House how the National and Liberal Parties are undermining public confidence in rural health services?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr KUCERA replied:

I am happy to answer that question. I also compliment the member for Collie on the extraordinarily good job he is doing for the health system generally. The level of misinformation that was used leading up to the Merredin by-election was disturbing. For the past three to four months, country members of the coalition have consistently denigrated their own health services and the good people who work in and run those services. I note the two parties opposite are no longer a coalition. They constantly run down what these people do.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr KUCERA: Those opposite should take a leaf out of the book of one of their own - Kath Finlayson - who wrote in the *Kalgoorlie Miner* on 27 September about the difficulty of attracting and retaining good health professionals in the goldfields. Kath Finlayson said -

Regardless of the amount of advertising and incentives offered, the situation in the Goldfields is not improving. I believe one of the reasons for this problem is the negative publicity emanating from our region.

She went on -

As a community we need to encourage people to live here and send out some positive vibes.

Mr Board interjected.

The SPEAKER: The member for Murdoch!

Mr KUCERA: People within country districts should be asking their responsible representatives to stop knocking the people who run the hospitals and the health systems within those areas, unlike the member for Greenough who realises that he has a good health service and supports it.