

MINISTER FOR HEALTH - FAILURE TO ADDRESS ABORIGINAL NEEDS

202. Mr P.D. OMODEI to the Minister for Health:

I refer to a comment by the member for Central Kimberley-Pilbara on Tuesday, when he said -

The officials of the Department of Health, with their vast resources for legislative change, need to focus in on mainstream issues. Instead of that, repeatedly during my time as a member of this place, we have been distracted by fringe issues.

- (1) How can the public have confidence in the minister's management of our health system, which is in crisis, when even his own members have no confidence in his ability to deliver health services in WA?
- (2) Does the minister accept that he, as the head of the health system as Minister for Health, has failed to address the real health needs of indigenous people in WA?

Mr J.A. McGINTY replied:

(1)-(2) My good friend the member for Central Kimberley-Pilbara is a person -
Several members interjected.

Mr J.A. McGINTY: He is. He has been for decades.
Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: I am sure members know we have a shortened question time. If members interject, we will not get through very many questions.

Mr J.A. McGINTY: What I appreciate about the member for Central Kimberley-Pilbara's contribution is that he believes with a passion in certain issues. It is something we do not often see in members opposite. He goes out and very consistently advocates a point of view. It happens to be a point of view that from time to time we will have differences about. We have a difference about surrogacy. He has put his particular point of view very passionately in this place and I appreciate the passion with which he did so because politics is about the fight for ideas and fighting for what one believes in. There is no better example of that than the member for Central Kimberley-Pilbara. In his passion for putting his point of view, in my view he was also quite flamboyant in some of the things he had to say. He made a worthwhile contribution to areas to which I should be addressing my attention in the health portfolio. One area for which we share a passion is Aboriginal health and the chronic, in fact tragic, outcomes so far as health is concerned for Aboriginal people. Nobody in this country has yet found the magic bullet to solve that problem but I am absolutely committed, as is the member for Central Kimberley-Pilbara, to finding solutions that will be of practical assistance to Aboriginal people.