DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH — REGIONAL HOSPITALS

Statement

HON COL HOLT (South West — Parliamentary Secretary) [9.45 pm]: Because the honourable member who was just on his feet would not take any interjections, I thought I would quickly make a contribution about some of the services that are being addressed by this government. The member talked quite a bit about health services in the wheatbelt region. I am not sure whether he has read any recent press, but there was quite a celebration throughout the Agricultural Region when many of the regional hospitals, including Merredin, Northam, Narrogin, Katanning and Manjimup, went to 24/7 emergency care. That is an outstanding effort and outstanding service delivery for the people who live in regional Western Australia throughout the wheatbelt region. I note that the member said that he no longer uses the services in Northam. What a shame that he cannot lead by example and show the people who elected him that they can use that facility. It is now a 24/7 facility with outstanding doctors. It is a shame that he cannot show by example that he and his family use that facility and get care as great as the care they can get in Perth.

I would like to set the record straight that a lot has been done, and will continue to be done, with health services by this government. When we got into government in 2008, that was one of the greatest challenges facing wheatbelt people. The people who live out there—obviously the member is one of those—will know that we are addressing it slowly but surely. It is a big challenge. It takes a lot of money. Every hospital in the wheatbelt region is being addressed with either a major rebuild or a refurbishment. The biggest challenge is always around the provision of doctors and primary health care. For the first time, a nurse practitioner is working out of Merredin Hospital to assist the overworked doctors to provide healthcare services throughout the wheatbelt, and more of them will arrive out there. The member who was just on his feet needs to remember that things are being done. He should lead by example and use some of those services.