

STRANDED DISABLED PERSON — FREMANTLE

110. Hon SUE ELLERY to the Minister for Disability Services:

I refer to question without notice 25 regarding Ms Monica McGhie.

- (1) Can the minister advise what protocols have been implemented to ensure that assistance is available within an appropriate time for those faced with situations similar to the one faced by Ms Monica McGhie?
- (2) Have the various emergency services that were contacted on the day of the incident been advised of the action required to ensure that a delay does not occur again; and, if not, why not?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1) Steps have been taken to carefully analyse the circumstances surrounding Ms Monica McGhie's unfortunate experience with the malfunctioning of a lift. It appears that while this situation caused Ms McGhie stress and discomfort, it was not an emergency situation. I will add to the written answer that I will present. This is a sensitive matter. From Monica's point of view, I think it was very much an emergency; it was a personal emergency, it was a distressing situation and it was a dilemma. I am fully sympathetic with Ms McGhie's situation in which she found herself, but in the context of the considered answer that I am providing after consultation with my agency, it was not, in the truest sense, an emergency. All owners of private or commercial buildings are required to have procedures in place to handle these situations. Given that this situation was not an emergency, the key issue becomes response time from the relevant authorities, and developing protocols would not have shortened the time frame for a response.
- (2) The Director General of the Disability Services Commission and access officers from the commission have spoken with Ms McGhie about her experience. On the basis of the information gained, the commission has raised the matter with the Fire and Emergency Services Authority of Western Australia. The focus of these discussions has been on raising awareness within FESA about the particular requirements of people with disabilities who have mobility restrictions and are unable to exit buildings through normal means.