

GOLDFIELDS WOMEN'S HEALTH CARE CENTRE

Statement

HON HELEN BULLOCK (Mining and Pastoral) [9.55 pm]: By some coincidence, during the recess I visited six not-for-profit organisations in Kalgoorlie. I also had the honour of listening to Hon Robyn McSweeney's speech at the opening ceremony of the new Centrecare office in Kalgoorlie. It is a very grand office indeed, compared with the facilities of the other five not-for-profit organisations that I visited. I must point out that Centrecare is more than 50 per cent funded by the federal government. It received \$4 million in funding in the 2010–11 budget relating to the Goldfields operation, of which \$2.1 million came from the federal government. However, that is not my focus today. What I am going to focus on today is one of the small not-for-profit organisations in the Goldfields, to provide members with a glimpse of the challenges and struggles it faces in delivering some much-needed services in its community.

The Goldfields Women's Health Care Centre is run by a group of dynamic local women who are committed to having a positive impact on the wellness of women in the Goldfields. The centre has provided to women clinical services, health information and referral since 1987. Due to increased demand for its programs, the centre expanded dramatically from providing two hours of services a week from a community house to now being open nine to five, Monday to Friday. It operates from a house that was purchased in 1988 with assistance from Lotterywest. Over the past few years, the services provided by the centre have increased dramatically. The number of clients utilising the centre has more than tripled, yet funding has increased only by the CPI. The services that are provided by the centre include, but are not limited to, information referral, continuous physiotherapy, a sexual wellness clinic, pap smears, sexually transmitted infections screening, dietician sessions and counselling on issues including unplanned pregnancy and postnatal depression.

The centre receives, on average, \$170 000 each year. This funding allows the centre to employ two full-time staff. All other support is provided with the assistance of volunteers. Due to the existing funding shortage, the centre has to cut some of its core services, including physiotherapy services and the sexual wellness clinic. Counselling services have been reduced to three days a week from five days a week, but these services are actually booked up four to five weeks in advance. At the moment, the most depressing issue for the centre is to find funding to fix its conference room ceiling. At the moment, the ceiling of the conference room is sitting on the conference room floor. After the centre had purchased the premises, two lots of extensions were added to the old building. The quality of the second lot of extensions was sacrificed to save some costs. As a result, the new roof was badly joined onto the old roof and the new roof is not steep enough to allow the rainwater to run off quickly. Therefore, in January when the storm hit the town, the rainwater got into the roof and accumulated on the ceiling of the conference room and eventually the ceiling caved in. As a result, the centre is unable to run many classes in its conference room.

Currently submissions for a grant have been lodged with the royalties for regions program, the City of Kalgoorlie–Boulder and Lotterywest in the hope that the Goldfields Women's Health Care Centre will receive some funding towards having the conference roof fixed, repairs to the old roof and refitting the conference room. The centre also hopes that the state government will somehow step in and provide a one-off grant to the centre to save it from this impossible situation.

I would have thought that the services that are provided by the GWHCC reduce a great deal of the pressure on local doctors, hospitals and nurses. I think the government should take these things into account, as well as the contribution the centre makes to the community, and think seriously of increasing the centre's annual funding. We are not talking about millions of dollars; we are not even talking about hundreds of thousands of dollars. We are talking about only \$50 000 or \$60 000. That increased funding would bring some relief to a small non-profit organisation such as the GWHCC. Surely, in the current prosperous economic situation, this is not a difficult request to meet. Surely the government can look into it and accede to this request. I am sure it can be done. Thank you, Mr President.