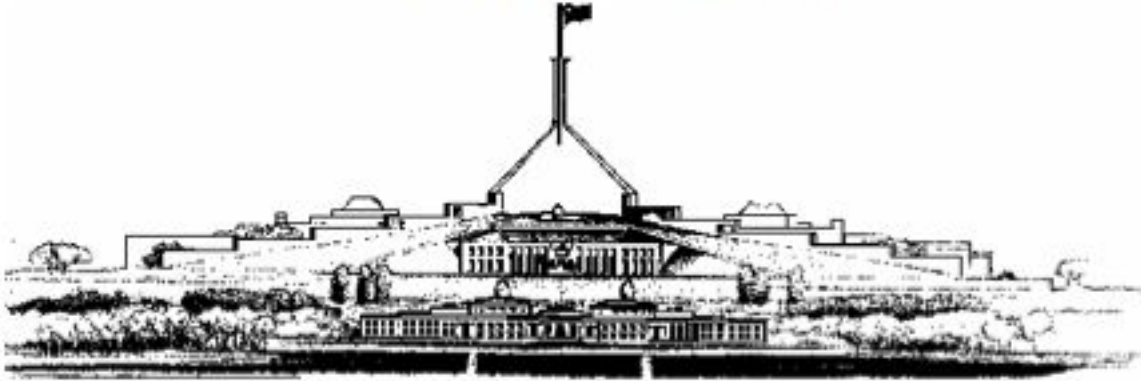




COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Federation Chamber

CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

Swan Electorate: Health Services

SPEECH

Monday, 26 November 2012

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

Date	Monday, 26 November 2012	Source	House
Page	13266	Proof	No
Questioner		Responder	
Speaker	Irons, Steve, MP	Question No.	

Mr IRONS (Swan) (10:30): I take the opportunity this morning to update the House on medical and health issues in my electorate of Swan. On 15 November I met with Jeanette Hackett the Vice-Chancellor of Curtin University, Professor William Hart, the head of medicine, along with Western Australian Senator Eggleston to discuss Curtin University's proposal for a new medical school at the Bentley campus, which is currently being considered by the federal government. It was good to visit the university with Senator Eggleston who, of course, has plenty of experience in medical matters, having been a practising doctor in the north-west of Western Australia for many years before he became a senator. We were able to tour the biosciences research precinct and discuss the medical school proposal in more detail with Ms Hackett and Professor Hart. Senator Eggleston and I are supportive of the medical school.

There is a shortage of doctors in WA. An article in the *West Australian* last weekend suggested that there was a shortage of 1,000 GPs across the state. Due to the shortage, we are currently taking overseas trained doctors, and we have been looking into some of the issues surrounding this trend in the Standing Committee on Health and Ageing with a report that was recently tabled. There are many overseas trained doctors across my electorate and they are much loved by the local communities they loyally serve. However, stats suggest that, even with these overseas doctors, we are not meeting the demand for GPs, and we need to look to the future and encourage as many people as possible to study medicine in WA. This needs to be a priority for all WA MPs from all parties. Curtin University is willing to be part of this drive to secure more doctors and we need to support them. Once again, in the chamber, I urge the federal government to provide support.

Over time, the new medical school could also strengthen Bentley Hospital with potential partnerships to be developed. We worked hard at Bentley Hospital to keep elective surgery services and to secure a commitment from the Barnett government to review a Labor decision to remove maternity services in 2014. We must keep a strong local hospital in Swan, and I will continue to support the Bentley Hospital.

On a further health issue, I have been working with John McGrath, the member for South Perth, to resolve an issue at the Mends Street Medical Centre in South Perth. The centre, which is popular among local residents, was closed recently after management problems. The doctors and the rent were not being paid, and the centre could not remain open. John McGrath and I have been in discussions with the AMA, the doctors and the patients in our attempts to have the centre reopened. The good news is that the centre has now been reopened after issues with the lease were resolved. We have met the new owner, Paris, who is in the process of opening the new centre. We will continue to work with Paris to help her resolve the many issues associated with reopening, including accessing medical files. Community services are important in Swan and health services in particular are essential. I continue to work with these for the community services in my electorate of Swan.