



Speech by

VAUGHAN JOHNSON

MEMBER FOR GREGORY

Hansard 14 November 2000

FLYING SURGEON SERVICE

Mr JOHNSON (Gregory—NPA) (10.17 a.m.): This morning I wish to bring to the attention of the House the plight of the Flying Surgeon Service in Longreach. This morning in the Chamber I heard the Premier say that one of the most important issues on which he came to power was health. I have to say again that the future of the Flying Surgeon Service in Longreach is in doubt. At the moment we have a temporary flying surgeon, a US surgeon, who has filled the void for some two months. I believe the position is available again, for a further 12 months, until the end of 2001.

This is not negotiable and we will not compromise. We will not accept anything other than the Flying Surgeon Service being retained in Longreach. It is essential to the wellbeing of people in remote areas—from Mount Isa in the north to Charleville in the south and east to as far as Emerald. Given the important role that this specialist service plays, it is paramount that advertisements be placed for the appointment of a full-time flying surgeon based in Longreach.

Today I say to the Premier and the Health Minister: we need that service to be retained to ensure the future viability of medical services in western Queensland. This is not an issue that I and the people of western Queensland take lightly. At the moment there is a lot of unease and unrest in the central west, the north-west and the south-west as to the future of that service. Today I urge the Minister to tell the people of western Queensland that this service will be retained in Longreach for the long term, not just for the short term. This is not negotiable and we will not compromise. We will not accept anything other than a full-time position being retained in Longreach for the people of not only the central west but the whole of western and remote Queensland.
