



Speech by

GARY FENLON

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PUBLIC HEALTH [INFECTION CONTROL FOR PERSONAL APPEARANCE SERVICES] BILL

Mr FENLON (Greenslopes—ALP) (12.06 a.m.): I rise to speak in support of the Public Health (Infection Control for Personal Appearance Services) Bill 2003. I wish to speak very briefly to this bill, particularly in relation to the importance of infection control. In a previous life I was involved with the work value assessments of nurses who work in that area, and we have already heard from a very capable enrolled nurse tonight, and that is an area which that area of the profession often worked within.

Infection control is a very complex area and it should not be underestimated. I recall that it was quite a revelation to me to work in this area and to find out just what was involved in terms of ensuring that blood products, where in contact with various medical utensils, were properly sterilised. There is an enormous discipline to it. Anyone who goes through an infection control area in a major hospital will find that this is a very complex area that has different areas of expertise that are applied to different sorts of materials—whether they be plastics, metals and fabrics—in terms of what standards of heat, steam, et cetera are applied to them.

In terms of the provisions of this bill requiring that these operators comply with these sorts of standards, it is very important that they comply with exactly the same standards that we are applying to the transmission of blood products in our public hospital system. I trust that the provisions that are set out in this bill provide exactly that. This is a very important exercise in the interests of public health. Many of us in this chamber are in exactly the same situation as others in the community—having teenage children who may currently or in the future be exposed to these operators—and we expect the highest standards to be exercised in our community.

These are standards that cannot be underestimated. They need to be at the highest level; exactly at those very high standards that we see operating in our public hospital system. I commend this bill to the House in terms of attempting to ensure those standards and also providing appropriate infrastructure for their enforcement. I commend this bill to the House.