

Mr J.N. Hyde: You've got to give the standing order.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, member for Perth!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The purpose of brief ministerial statements - which I introduced to this Parliament as Leader of the House - was for ministers to make announcements about their portfolios. It is not to be used for the purpose of general debate. That was clearly the intention. The purpose of brief ministerial statements is for ministers to make announcements about their ministerial responsibilities, rather than use them as question time in another form. It is not an opportunity for ministers to enter into debate through brief ministerial statements. This is a breach of the intent of brief ministerial statements.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The minister has just begun his ministerial statement. The subject appears to be within the confines of his portfolio. I think the member for Cottesloe has had an opportunity to make his point, and so we will continue with the ministerial statement.

Debate Resumed

Mr J.A. McGINTY: I will go back to that paragraph. Australian Medical Association spokesman Dr Paul Skerriitt, like Pavlov's dog, simply barked "shock-horror" when asked to criticise the state government. He too was misled. This is simply not true, and had Mr Emerson taken the time to do his research properly he would have known that. The most basic quality of a good journalist is that he get his facts right. Daniel Emerson has failed that requirement.

There is a worldwide shortage of mental health nurses. It is a challenging, unglamorous job and demand outstrips supply in all countries. In order to be competitive with other jurisdictions, from 1 July 2007 the WA Department of Health has offered relocation costs of up to \$20 000 for overseas mental health nurses and up to \$10 000 for interstate recruits. Prior to granting reimbursement of relocation costs, specific and detailed receipts illustrating incurred costs associated with relocation are required. Relocation remuneration is split into two payments. The first payment - 50 per cent of the entitlement - is made upon commencement of employment. The remaining 50 per cent will be paid at the end of 12 months' continual employment within a public mental health service.

Only certain expenses are covered, as per business rules. The items for which reimbursement of relocation expenses may be paid include: one-way, economy airfare for the employee and immediate family members, for example spouse or partner and dependent children, and related travel insurance; professional registration and/or membership costs in Western Australia; moving of household goods by a professional removalist, including appropriate insurance for loss or damage to goods, within four months of departure from overseas; storage of household items upon arrival in Western Australia for up to three months; and visa application fees payable to the Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship. This may include fees for a temporary residency visa and a subsequent application for permanent residency if the application is made immediately upon arrival. The department will also reimburse recruits up to \$5 000 for up to six weeks' accommodation when they first arrive.

In May this year, *The West Australian* editor, Paul Armstrong, was quoted in *The Australian* newspaper as saying that his newspaper has a policy requiring that, if an item is wrong, it be corrected as soon as possible and as close as practical to the page on which the error first appeared. Taking Mr Armstrong at his word, I wrote to him on Tuesday this week pointing out the error in Mr Emerson's story. I am still waiting to see the correction.

THE CLIFFE - HERITAGE LISTING

Grievance

MR C.J. BARNETT (Cottesloe) [9.15 am]: My grievance is directed to the Minister for Heritage, and concerns a property in my electorate, at 25 Bindaring Parade, Peppermint Grove, known as The Cliffe. I emphasise that this is a private home. The Cliffe is a very rambling old timber home. It was originally built in two stages between 1894 and 1898 by an engineer by the name of Neil McNeil. He was a businessman with extensive interests in timber, including the Jarrahdale Timber Company. He built this house out of wood to demonstrate what could be done with wood. It was very much against the wishes of the local community at the time. When the house was originally built, it was quite grand. It had a billiard room, tennis courts, a croquet court, extensive gardens, a summer house, stables and cottages for staff.

The property, however, is now nothing like it would have originally been in the 1890s. As long ago as 1915 the land was subdivided to create 20 lots. When McNeil passed away, the property was bought by prominent industrialist Lance Brisbane. In 1962, the property was further subdivided into another six lots. It was then purchased by Dr Harold McComb, who owned it until 1995, when it was bought by Mrs Sharon Creasy for \$2.7 million. It is an extensive area of land in a very valuable location. Mrs Creasy bought the property with the intention of demolishing the house and building a family home on the site. She purchased the site by public auction in March 1995. There was no indication at that stage that this property would be subject to any form of

heritage listing. Indeed, it was not even included on the municipal inventory list. Mrs Creasy had absolutely no reason to believe that there would be any sort of heritage issue on this property.

The issue arose when Mrs Creasy signalled her intention to develop the property, which would have required the demolition of the old timber structure. At that stage the Heritage Council of Western Australia placed a conservation order on the property, and subsequently placed it, on an interim basis, on the Register of Heritage Places in October 1995 - 12 years ago. The Creasys contested that interim listing for nine years, and in 2004 the Heritage Council removed the house from the interim listing and placed it on permanent register. There was a legal dispute about whether that was done correctly, and a case was mounted by Malcolm McCusker, QC, on behalf of the Creasys. As a result of that, the Heritage Council removed the property from the interim listing and re-registered it as a permanent listing in May 2005. The dispute has continued, and proceedings are currently before the Supreme Court. The Creasys estimate that, to this stage, they have spent over \$225 000 on legal costs.

The Creasys have done everything humanly possible to resolve this issue. They have looked at restoring the property. They have offered to gift the structure of the house, if it can be relocated to another site, and they have offered to contribute financially to the relocation and restoration of the building on another site. They have also sought to resolve this issue through the Supreme Court. They have taken action through the State Administrative Tribunal on the basis that, if this property is of such immense importance, perhaps the state should be required to purchase it at market value. That is not about to happen. As I said, they have offered to contribute to the relocation and restoration of the building at another site.

I have visited The Cliffe a couple of times. I am aware that the minister has also visited it, and I appreciate that. The reality is that this is an old timber house from the 1890s. It looks impressive from a distance, but on closer inspection it is obvious that it is in a state of disrepair. In fact, it is uninhabitable. The ceilings have collapsed, and there has been further recent damage, and the floors are uneven. It is essentially falling down. It was never the grand house that people might imagine. It is quite basic and simple inside. The amount needed to restore the house to a habitable condition - not into a modern family home, but just to make it safe to live in - is estimated at \$2.8 million. The Creasys have absolutely no intention of spending that amount of money on this old, dilapidated wooden structure. Of course, the state could offer to buy the property at market value. That would be many millions of dollars and I suggest that that would be a misuse of scarce heritage funding. There would be far more important heritage projects around the state than this property. There is a dilemma. This has been a problem for the 12 years that the Creasys have owned the property. They cannot sell it, the state will not buy it, they cannot redevelop it, the house is not worth restoring and they cannot offer it to a third party. There has been a hiatus. Meanwhile, the old timber house has continued to fall apart.

To summarise the case, the house was first placed on the Register of Heritage Places on an interim basis and then permanently, after the purchaser had purchased the property. As a layperson, I can say that the house is certainly interesting but that it is not of high heritage value. It is in an extremely poor condition. It is not safe. No-one is living in it. No-one could live in this house. I would not spend a night in it. It is simply falling apart. The state is not willing to, nor would I advocate that it should, purchase the property. It does not warrant that. The house is not open to the public and it never will be. It is not even visible to the public. There will be no public benefit from any heritage listing of this property. The house is not worth the millions of dollars needed to either restore or relocate it. The Creasys considered in good faith whether it was practicable to gift the property to the state and move it to some public venue, but that was found not to be feasible. Most of the heritage architects who have looked at the property would agree that it would be virtually impossible to remove it. It is not worth spending the \$2.8 million that is needed to restore the property. That will not happen. The Creasys will not spend that money on a dilapidated house.

I appreciate the fact that the minister has visited the site. I urge her to use her powers as minister to remove this property from the heritage list. It is one of the very few private homes placed on the state heritage list. It is serving no useful heritage function. I believe that after 12 years, the Creasys should have the right to demolish the building and redevelop the site for their family home.

MRS M.H. ROBERTS (Midland - Minister for Heritage) [9.21 am]: I thank the member for Cottesloe for raising this issue in the house. I am aware that he has been very determined in his pursuit of this matter in the interests of his constituents. He made contact with me about this issue last year when I first became heritage minister. I would also like a speedy and satisfactory resolution to this dispute, which has been going on for many years. Disputes of this nature do not really further the cause of Western Australia's heritage or the work of the Heritage Council. Instead, they make people afraid of heritage listing. As minister, I receive letters from people who are fearful of the implications of heritage listing. We should embrace our heritage. The purpose of the Heritage of Western Australia Act is to provide for and encourage the conservation of places that have significance to the cultural heritage of the state. As Minister for Heritage, I wish for the people of this state to have a positive view of heritage and heritage listing. I do not wish them to dread heritage listing. I would not wish for the blind pursuit of preservation of the past becoming a barrier to construction for the future.

I visited the property in question and share the views of the member for Cottesloe. I believe that the property is dilapidated beyond reasonable repair and that there is no value in maintaining the heritage listing of this derelict, decaying property. I am also mindful of the arguments that the member for Cottesloe has raised. I am mindful that whatever the council has found concerning the property's heritage value, its heritage utility is very limited. The property offers no view from the street, it will not be open to the public and it does not add to or comprise a heritage precinct. As the member is aware, it is open to me as minister to direct the Heritage Council to remove the property from the Register of Heritage Places. The member will also be aware that I can make such a direction only after receiving advice from the Heritage Council, and that my direction must be confirmed by a vote of both houses of Parliament. In response to the member for Cottesloe's grievance and because I am also concerned, I inform the member that I intend to write to the Heritage Council as a matter of urgency to seek that advice. It has been said that this action might set a bad precedent because no place has yet been taken off the register. My response to that concern is that while it will certainly set a precedent in Western Australia, I do not believe that it will necessarily set a bad precedent. In fact, it may well be a good precedent. The Heritage Council is composed of experts in their fields. Their views have weight. This house is composed of representatives of the people of Western Australia, and their views also have weight. Arguably, they have greater weight. This precedent will demonstrate to the people of Western Australia that they have a Parliament, a government and a minister who hear and understand their fears and apprehensions about heritage listing and are also prepared to uphold their rights and prerogatives.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS

Grievance

MRS J. HUGHES (Kingsley) [9.25 am]: My grievance is to the Minister for Sport and Recreation about the Special Olympics and a visit I received from Margaret Bush. I am aware that Trish McLean also visited the member for Joondalup, Tony O'Gorman, to discuss some issues of concern, such as the need for funding to assist 11 athletes to attend the Special Olympics in Shanghai. I will put a few things in perspective. The Special Olympics were founded by Eunice Kennedy Shriver, the sister of John Kennedy, in the 1960s. Today, more than one million athletes train and compete in more than 150 countries around the world. Anyone with an intellectual disability who is over the age of eight can join the Special Olympics, and anyone aged between five and eight years can participate in the training programs. However, children under the age of eight are not able to compete in the Special Olympics Games. Every Special Olympics athlete competes according to his or her ability. Sports represented at both the national and international Special Olympics include basketball, gymnastics, golf, softball, swimming and tenpin bowling, and track and field events. These games offer year-round sports training and competition. This not only benefits the physical and mental fitness of participants, but also helps athletes to increase their confidence and improve their social skills through teamwork and personal development. It even assists participants with public speaking through the athlete leadership program, and offers travel opportunities and the joy of competing. It sets the scene for participants to enjoy, excel in and perhaps even win in their chosen field of sport. The common theme is that most athletes compete or simply join in more than one sport. This helps them to develop new skills, make new friends or to simply just enjoy doing new things.

In Australia, approximately 3 000 athletes are involved in this program, with about 1 000 volunteers in 39 regions throughout the states and territories. Events are held throughout the year, with state games held annually. World events such as the Special Olympics Games occur only every four years. The Special Olympics World Summer Games will cover 23 sports with 7 000 athletes from 169 countries. It will be the twelfth World Summer Games and the first to be held in Asia. This will be only the second time that the games have been held outside the United States. The organisers of the Special Olympics expect the games to attract about 40 000 volunteers, 3 500 event officials and thousands of families, spectators and journalists from every continent.

On Tuesday, 18 September, Sydney will host the Special Olympics Flame of Hope, which will be carried during the global Law Enforcement Torch Run for the 2007 Special Olympics World Summer Games in Shanghai. The torch will be carried by teams of Special Olympics athletes and law enforcement personnel around the spectacular surrounds of Sydney en route to Shanghai, where it will be used to ignite the giant cauldron at the World Summer Games opening ceremony on 2 October. This will be the first time that the torch run has come to Australia. It is a wonderful thing for our young athletes to be a part of that. The decision to include Sydney in the inaugural global torch run recognises the growing contribution of Australian athletes to these games and to the international Special Olympics movement, as well as the country's strong sporting culture. The Flame of Hope will begin its world journey in Athens, as it does for all Special Olympics events. The torch will be lit first at the sacred Pnyx near the Acropolis. By the time the Flame of Hope reaches Shanghai, it will have travelled through 11 major world cities, including Cairo, London, Washington DC, Seoul, Tokyo, Sydney and Beijing. It will be taken around the perimeter of the Opera House, and it will then head to Government House, where an official ceremony will be held. This will be an exciting event that will signify to our athletes in Western Australia that their hard work is noted and esteemed.