

COUNTRY HEALTH SA FEE INCREASES 25th September 2008

In response to a Motion by

Ms CHAPMAN (Bragg—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (12:18): *I move:*

That this house condemns the government for increasing fees for domiciliary care type services provided by Country Health SA.

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (12:33): I, too, support the motion moved by the member for Bragg and congratulate her and the member for Goyder on their comments. It seems that the government does not acknowledge the massive amount of money saved by people living in their own homes and not looking for places to live because services are currently supplied to people living in their own homes. It is entirely relevant that these care services are supplied by Country Health to keep people in their homes. My 88 year old father still lives in his home, and I hope he does for a while yet, but his health issues will need to be monitored.

When you live 150 kilometres from the centre of Adelaide, services whither away the further from the city centre you go, particularly when you have a city-centric administration that does not realise that things exist outside its mainly city-based electorates and we run into trouble. I acknowledge the services that have been supplied not just through Country Health but through some of the federally funded programs and non-government agencies that help people stay in their homes, which are to be commended.

Some of these services, including services provided by Country Health, need a full audit in order to see how much of the money that goes into funding these services actually hits the ground and how much is tied up in the bureaucracy running these vital functions for regional communities. They save the government hundreds of millions of dollars in aged-care facilities, whether they be independent living facilities, low-needs facilities or high-needs facilities. It saves that full continuum of service for as long as people can live in their own home.

As a result of my father's situation, things such as handrails and other facilities have been put into the house to ensure ease of access. It makes it so much easier when someone can be in their own home, especially in the country. Too many people from regional areas have been moved off for whatever reason—probably because of a lack of services—and gone into homes, and they shut down and end their days far quicker than they would if they were able to stay in their own home.

That is the crux of this motion. People will be priced out of being able to stay in their own home, where they want to be, and will have to go somewhere else, which in the longer term will cost the government hundreds of millions of dollars in the bigger scheme of things. I commend the motion of the member for Bragg; I think it is an excellent initiative.