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HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday 6 July 2005

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE: MULTIPLE CHEMICAL SENSITIVITY

Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphett): I rise to support the report being tabled here by the Social Development Committee. I was first made aware of this issue a number of years ago during the election campaign, when I was door knocking and came across a constituent at Somerton Park who suffers from multiple chemical sensitivity. After speaking to her for a while through her door, I was made well and truly aware of the debilitating condition from which this lady was suffering.

While I have a reasonable knowledge of allergies and sensitivities through the pharmacology and dermatology that I did at vet school, and at my vet practice dealing with animals (and certainly allergies and dermatological conditions are very widespread and common in veterinary practice), the more insidious and all-enveloping condition of multiple chemical sensitivity is not something that was mentioned in the animal field. However, having spoken to this lady, and having listened to the member for Taylor's speech today, I picked up a copy of the report yesterday evening, and I have not had a chance to look at it yet.

This is a condition that needs to be considered very carefully by all the health authorities, and it is good that the parliament has produced such an in-depth report. I congratulate them on the work that they have done and the report that they have produced, because this is a condition that will not go away. Recognition of sufferers of multiple chemical sensitivity is something that we need to be advancing all the time and, if it happens through reports and the work of the committee, I encourage members of the health industry to further their work and further their recognition, so that people's lives can be improved. If there is a particular immunological condition that may predispose people to multiple chemical sensitivity, it needs to be recognised, because of the millions of chemicals that we have around the place. I am sure that this particular condition, or variants of it, will become more and more common, and it is something that we need to recognise. It is nice to be a part of a parliament that is actually producing some worthwhile results, and this particular report is just one example of that fine work.