

## Legislative Council

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### DRUGS, DETOXIFICATION

**The Hon. A. BRESSINGTON** (14:40): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the minister representing the Minister for Health and the Minister for Mental Health and Substance Abuse a question about heroin detoxification.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. A. BRESSINGTON**: On the weekend I was contacted by the mother of an opiate-addicted person who has now been clean for five years; she was stabilised on methadone, and has gradually reduced her dose down to a very low one. This person has managed to get her life together, has got back control of her children from Families SA, and has been volunteering for the past three years. This is after 20 years of chronic heroin addiction; she was formerly a prostitute and basically led a dysfunctional life.

The mother complained to me about a method of detoxification being used by a doctor at Noarlunga, Dr Rhys Henning, who at one stage was a member of the board of DASSA. Apparently, the doctor is using ketamine to detox heroin and methadone addicts and is releasing these people from hospital with no support. He provides a phone number that they can ring if things go pear-shaped, but it costs \$1 per minute. This is the only level of support in place for the people going through this treatment. My questions to both ministers are:

1. Has this method of detoxification been undertaken as a trial through DASSA, and is the government conducting any form of monitoring of this particular procedure?
2. Has the government been made aware of any adverse effects on opiate-dependent persons who have gone through this procedure?
3. Will the Minister for Health and the Minister for Mental Health and Substance Abuse undertake to have this detoxification investigated and report the findings back to this parliament?

I might add that the addict that I am talking about has now tail-spun; she is using again and is out on the street prostituting herself again after five years out of that lifestyle.

**The Hon. G.E. GAGO** (Minister for State/Local Government Relations, Minister for the Status of Women, Minister for Consumer Affairs, Minister for Government Enterprises, Minister Assisting the Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Energy) (14:43): I thank the honourable member for her important questions. I am happy to refer those questions to the relevant ministers in another place and bring back a reply in relation to her concerns about ketamine detox treatment and that particular client.