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A Buddha In the Office

Dr Mike Nahan, the Member for Riverton said the recent Coffee Shop Forum held by the WA Chinese Chamber of Commerce (WACCC) at the Hyatt Regency, Perth entitled A Buddha In The Office had provided some very good advice that could be applied to all businesses.

More than 250 people attended the Coffee Shop Forum, which featured The Venerable Ajahn Brahm, who is the Abbot of the Buddhist Monastery in Serpentine and the Spiritual Director of the Buddhist Society in WA.

"Ajahn Brahm is a very humorous speaker and he uses his extensive experience to pass on his wisdom and philosophy about life and business in a way that has his audience enthralled with his every word," said Dr Nahan.

"One of his many hilarious snippets of advice to those who were attending was that he couldn't just rely on 2,500 years of 'monking' to get his message across about how to manage stress and enhance business performance."

"He said that like all business leaders, he had to stay abreast of the times and despite leading an austere life as a monk, he is able to do that by listening. He said that many people are so busy in their lives and work that they don't take the time to listen or to notice what was going on around them."

Dr Nahan said Ajahn Brahm came from a working-class background in the UK and studied Theoretical Physics at Cambridge University before travelling to Thailand to become a monk.

"One of his main points was that business people often do not take the time to rest. He jokingly told the audience they should lock their bosses up in a cupboard for 30 minutes so that they could stop and rest for a while. He said the bosses would be far more productive and much easier to deal with if they had that rest," said Dr Nahan.

Dr Nahan, who participated in the panel discussion afterwards with lawyer Patti Chong, WACCC senior vice president Jimmy Yong, celebrity publicist Rosita Stangl and Curtin University's multi-faith officer Dr Sven Ostring, said he had asked Ajahn Brahm about the role that karma might play in business and politics.

"Ajahn told me that the law of karma was about the effort, energy and care that you put into your life rather than what you could get out of it. He said it comes down to the ingredients that you use, such as your skills and abilities, and how you put them together that counts in any field, not just politics or business," said Dr Nahan.

"He recommended that we should push aside wrong things and focus on good things because they are the ones that are important, and I believe that's very good advice indeed."

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