

ALBANY REGIONAL HOSPITAL — WITHDRAWAL OF GP SERVICES

1481. Mr P.B. Watson to the Minister for Health

Given that weekend General Practitioner services to the Albany Regional Hospital supplied by The Surgery are to be withdrawn, can the Minister detail the following costs of replacing these services by General Practitioners from Perth:

- (a) airfares;
- (b) accommodation;
- (c) car hire; and
- (d) locum finding fees?

Dr K.D. HAMES replied:

(a)-(d) There is no contract with The Surgery for any services at Albany Hospital.

Some General Practitioners (GPs) from The Surgery provide a range of services at Albany Hospital. Some of these services will change from 1 October 2009, particularly as there will no longer be a requirement to provide cover of the Emergency Department (ED) from that date.

Doctors from The Surgery have indicated their refusal to cover the ED. The WA Country Health Service (WACHS) has an obligation to maintain safe services and provide continuity of care. On this basis, options for procuring necessary medical staff, on an interim basis, are currently being explored.

Until arrangements to implement a staffed ED are in place, where possible, local GPs will be used to staff the ED and thus no fees or travel and accommodation costs would be incurred. Should locum agencies be used their fees are expected to be approximately 12.5 percent of Doctor payments. Standard locum rates offered by WACHS for GPs in ED are \$1,350-\$1,450 per day.

Accommodation, where provided, is generally in self contained units, the rental cost of which is approximately \$500 per week.