

HOSPITALS, WAITING LISTS, PURCHASE OF SURGERY FROM NON-PUBLIC HOSPITALS

294. Mr M.F. BOARD to the Minister for Health:

I refer the minister to our overburdened public hospitals and waiting times of more than five months for elective surgery in Western Australia for hip, liver, reproductive, spinal, prostate and colon operations. Will the minister support a program such as that recently proposed by a federal Government health advisory group for the purchase of surgery, and possibly allied health support, from non-public hospitals by the Department of Health?

Mr R.C. KUCERA replied:

I would support anything the federal Government does to help us reduce our waiting lists. However, I would need to look at that in some detail. I have the capacity within public hospitals, but there is a lack of funding from the federal system and an inability to access funding through the current rules. If many of the rules in the current health care agreement that was negotiated by the previous Government were changed in accordance with the kinds of things that I have put to the federal minister, there would not be a need in this State to put more money into the private system. At the end of the day, it is about a balance - a partnership. I am more than happy to enter into a partnership with the federal Government for anything it wishes to do to improve the health of Western Australians.