

EASTERN WHEATBELT HEALTH SERVICE, FUNDING

**554. Mr WALDRON to the Minister for Health:**

Given the public comments made yesterday by the chairman of the Eastern Wheatbelt Health Service that the service will have a \$900 000 shortfall this financial year -

- (1) Can the minister assure the House that basic clinical needs in the eastern wheatbelt will not be compromised?
- (2) Will the minister commit to table in this House, by the end of the year, the budgets of all regional health services in Western Australia for the past financial year and this financial year, together with a list of the new health and administrative functions regional health services have been given for this financial year and the cost of those new functions?

**Mr KUCERA replied:**

- (1)-(2) The estimates committee and budgeting processes have been a traditional part of government in this State and I suspect that all members of this House have made good use of those processes. All the forward estimates and costings are in the budget papers. I suggest that members read them. I see no need to table individual issues. Budgets and the outcomes of hospital services vary from time to time. In relation to the broad thrust of funding in health for rural budgets -

Mr Board interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, member for Murdoch!

Mr KUCERA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. As I have said on a number of occasions in this House, there was an eight per cent across the board increase in health funding for rural budgets. I do not know of any other agency that received that kind of increase. I do not know of any private industry within this State that received that kind of increase and was asked to manage within its budget process. I have drawn a line in the sand with the various boards and hospital managers. For the first time for a number of years in this State, the hospital boards and managers have been asked to responsibly manage the money provided by taxpayers, which the community relies upon them to spend wisely. I am asking them to properly manage their budgets for the first time in many years. A bilateral process has been instigated with the Department of Health. The reform process is moving forward with the country boards. I ask them to manage properly and sensibly.