

RURAL SURGICAL SERVICE, ALTERNATIVE SERVICES

679. Mr AINSWORTH to the Minister for Health:

I refer to the rural surgical service - which will cease to operate in six weeks because of the minister's decision not to continue funding - and to his comment in debate in this House on Wednesday, 7 November about alternative services that "will be in place by 31 January 2002, when this contract runs out", and ask -

- (1) How much of the \$6 million has been spent that the minister said would put medical specialists into country Western Australia?
- (2) How will specialist medical services that have been provided to the people of Lake Grace and Paraburdoo by the rural surgical service be provided from 31 January 2002?

Mr KUCERA replied:

I thank the member for Roe for his question, of which he gave me some notice.

- (1)-(2) The Government has committed \$6 million over the next four years, \$1 million of which will be applied to the 2001-02 health budget. The Lake Grace community will receive general surgical services through a local general practitioner from February 2002. The West Pilbara Health Service, like all other health services, is currently developing plans for future specialist services in the area. The involvement of the university rural surgical service will be clarified shortly following a meeting between Professor House and the Director General of Health, which it is anticipated will lead to a satisfactory conclusion.