

NURSES, ENTERPRISE BARGAINING AGREEMENT

**382. Mr M.F. BOARD to the Minister for Health:**

I refer the minister to the ongoing strike by prison nurses.

- (1) Will the minister confirm that he wrote to all nurses, including all prison nurses, in August this year stating that all nurses in public health would receive back pay on their enterprise bargaining agreement from May 2001? The letter in part states -

In recognition of the valuable work and skill level of the Nursing Profession some of the key changes to pay and conditions include:

- a 13.5% wage increase - over 3 years which started with 5% from May 2001.

- (2) Does the minister believe that prison nurses are part of public health; and, if so, why is he not honouring his commitment?
- (3) If no to (2), why did the minister mislead prison nurses?

**Mr R.C. KUCERA replied:**

- (1)-(3) When the Government negotiated what has been described by the secretary of the Australian Nursing Federation as the best deal for nurses in 10 years, I wrote to every nurse employed under awards related to that agreement. Some of them are public health nurses employed in government agencies other than the Department of Health, but come under that award. A number of other nurses, throughout the public system, are employed under other awards and agreements, and by other agencies. I understand the Disability Services Commission has a number of nurses, as does the Department of Justice and a whole host of other agencies. The communications I had as a result of that enterprise bargaining agreement were with nurses employed by my department under that award, or nurses who were working, at the department's behest, in other government agencies under that specific award. My understanding is that all the nurses employed under the award, negotiated by the ANF and the Department of Health, were quite rightly entitled to their award. This was communicated to them, and that was the matter.