

CENTRAL WAIT LIST BUREAU, FUNDING

**658. Mr BOARD to the Minister for Health:**

I refer the minister to the previous Government's allocation for this year of approximately \$25 million to the Central Wait List Bureau to reduce elective surgery waiting times. That allocation was funded by the 1998 Medicare agreement.

- (1) Can the minister confirm that under his Government, funding to the Central Wait List Bureau has been slashed by half?
- (2) Can the minister also confirm that, due to the lack of funding, the Central Wait List Bureau is unable to transfer patients to any public hospitals except Joondalup Health Campus and Peel Health Campus until at least June next year?

**Mr KUCERA replied:**

- (1)-(2) I thank the member for that question, because it gives me an opportunity to put on record our appreciation for the fine work that the Central Wait List Bureau, and particularly its head, Michele Wilkie, does for the health service in this State. There are no plans to undertake what the member for Murdoch has suggested.

Mr Day: Are you going to keep it?

Mr KUCERA: We need to look at how we handle the issues of health funding in this State. The member for Murdoch and the interjector next to him are well aware of the issues relating to waiting lists. Our waiting lists are the lowest they have been for many years. That is not to say that we will not have pressures. Our hospitals have this year experienced enormous pressures through vancomycin-resistant enterococci and other constant demands. A team of health professionals is today assisting the federal Government with issues at the detention centre at Christmas Island. We also have major issues with senior medical cover and the availability of doctors. That shortage of doctors impacts on the waiting lists. The funding for the bureau is in place. That money was allocated through this year's funding process, which the member for Murdoch had ample opportunity to examine during the estimates hearings. The wait list bureau is a great program, and it will continue.