

HOSPITALS, CLOSURE OF EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS

181. Mr BOARD to the Minister for Health:

During a radio interview on Monday 25 June, the minister indicated that some emergency departments in Perth hospitals might need to close. I have a copy of the transcript. Does the Minister have plans to close any emergency departments; if not, why did he say that we cannot afford to run emergency departments and why has he indicated that there are too many emergency departments in Perth hospitals?

Mr KUCERA replied:

The question indicates a lack of depth of the member for Murdoch's knowledge of emergency departments. If the member had listened to the full interview, he would realise that what he is saying has been taken out of context. The inference was not that emergency facilities would be closed. I said there needed to be appropriate emergency facilities in all hospitals but that we cannot afford to have the kind of emergency facility we have in Royal Perth Hospital and Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital in every hospital in this city. The member's colleague sitting alongside him knows full well that is the case. The comment I made was in answer to questions about Armadale-Kelmscott Memorial Hospital. I raised the issue of the emergency unit facility that needs to be built there. The comment I made was that the appropriate facility for an outer hospital would be one that stabilised people in emergency situations. That occurs at Murdoch and Joondalup and at other similar hospitals. A full emergency facility is needed at major hospitals. The previous Government was involved in that. The outer suburban hospitals need appropriate facilities. The member for Murdoch would agree that the Government could not build full emergency facilities at every hospital in this State.