

MEDICARE ALLIANCE

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

I refer the minister to the Labor Medicare alliance supported by the Premier in this place yesterday.

- (1) Can the minister confirm that the alliance would involve the establishment of a Medicare commission, based in Canberra, to determine health spending priorities and to distribute funds?
- (2) Is it not a fact that under the alliance, the redevelopment of the heart unit at Royal Perth Hospital, announced by the minister yesterday, could not proceed without first meeting the priorities of the Medicare commission?

**Mr KUCERA replied:**

- (1) Yes. As I understand it, the alliance has been well put together and a commission will oversee it, but I do not have the full details of that. The alliance is such a step forward that I applaud it. It will be a real move forward to be able to sit down at long last with the commonwealth people and a health minister who actually cares and admits that we have pressures within the system.
- (2) I am very pleased that the member for Murdoch raised the issue of the heart unit that was opened yesterday. In that regard, I also commend my predecessor for his efforts in ensuring that occurred, as did we as a Government when we came to power. Yesterday, I watched in absolute amazement as a real operation took place in front of me on an elderly woman who had suffered a heart attack just two hours before. It was absolutely amazing to see the skill of those surgeons and the way they worked. An amount of \$4.3 million was committed to that unit. It is a fine unit, and of course any alliance would support such a unit within this State. I look forward with pleasure to working with Jenny Macklin and Kim Beazley in two weeks in an alliance that will ensure that we have proper health care in this State.