

SOUTH WEST HEALTH SERVICE, BUDGET ALLOCATION

**1142. Mr BOARD to the Minister for Health:**

I refer the minister to the South West Health Service, which covers the regional areas of Bunbury, Harvey, Yarloop, Vasse, Leeuwin, Wellington and Warren-Blackwood.

- (1) Can the minister confirm that the increase in the health budget this year was one per cent, which is effectively a real cut of five per cent in the health budget?
- (2) Can the minister confirm that 50 positions at the South West Health Service will shortly be made redundant?
- (3) Have the people of the south west been consulted in any way over the slashing of the health service?

**Mr KUCERA replied:**

- (1)-(3) As I explained very clearly to the member for Murdoch at the estimates committee hearings, global allocations for health have been made. Allocations for the individual health services have not yet been made, so no budgets have been slashed. They have not even been set. Many discussions have been held on the requirements of the various health authorities. I understand that a global redundancy package has been offered across government this year. I expect that some people within the south west area will take up that offer. At the end of the day, nobody is being sacked from the health system, particularly not doctors and nurses. It is the same redundancy program as everybody else is exposed to and we will honour it. We will allow the good people who decide they wish to move on to do so. The difference between this Government and the Opposition is that we do not respond to innuendos and false information. We respond to facts. We work to properly constituted budgetary programs that bring the management of hospitals into line with every other government agency. Hospitals and health services must properly operate within those budgetary programs. At the end of the day, hospitals work together as a group within an area health authority to deliver better health.

Mr Board interjected.

Mr KUCERA: The member for Murdoch asked the question and I shall answer it for him. We have asked the South West Health Service, as we have all other health services, to work to a budget to deliver a quality health service in its area. As a result of my visit to almost every hospital in that area, I have no doubt that that is exactly what it will do.