

HEALTH FUNDING, REGIONAL AREAS

**819. Mr T.K. WALDRON to the Minister for Health:**

I refer to the decision of health ministers, which was made at the end of last week, not to support the state government funding agreement. Given that the state health budget was predicated on the signing of that agreement, will the minister give a guarantee that funding will not be taken from regional health to prop up the metropolitan health system because the department will be operating with a \$20 million shortfall?

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

May I first correct the member for Wagin? The budget is predicated on the existing agreement, which will give the State \$400 million more than the proposed agreement. I ask the member for Wagin whether he will join with us in taking the fight to the federal Government to make sure we get a decent deal. Is that the view of his party? Will the member support us in our fight with Canberra? Since the Labor Government came to office, it has been very proud of its record on health services in the regions. It has done more for the regions in two and a half years in real, practical terms than the previous Government even thought about, let alone did. Neither I, as Minister of Health, nor we, as the Government, will resile from the fact that we are getting a raw deal from Canberra on this matter. If the member wishes me to kiss away \$400 million over the next five years -

Mr C.J. Barnett: Boring!

Mr R.C. KUCERA: Is it not interesting, that the Leader of the Opposition in this State finds boring the most fundamental problem that faces the people. The one key issue about which he should be on his hind legs and supporting the Government is funding for health services. All we hear from him is that it is boring. We will tell his constituents that he thinks that their health is boring. What a wonderful thing to say!

The SPEAKER: I call to order the Leader of the Opposition for the second time, and the members for Carine and Hillarys.