

MEDICAL INDEMNITY TORT LAW REFORM

**579. Mr M.F. BOARD to the Minister for Health:**

I refer the minister to his claim, made on ABC radio on Monday morning, that the State Government, through the Attorney General, is addressing the issue of medical indemnity tort law reform. He said that he and the Attorney General had had a meeting with the Australian Medical Association the previous Thursday.

- (1) Can the minister confirm that the Attorney General was not, in fact, at that meeting and had no input into those discussions?
- (2) Is the minister aware that the Attorney General has still not met with the Australian Medical Association?
- (3) Is the minister further aware that the AMA stated that there had been no tangible outcome from its meeting with the minister?
- (4) Will the minister tell the House what agreement he has made with the Attorney General to commence drafting statute of limitations reforms or any other reforms that will help resolve the issues affecting the services of general practitioners and specialists in Western Australia?

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

- (1)-(4) If the member for Murdoch was listening to that report on Monday morning, he would know that I said that I met during last week with the MDA, which is the Medical Defence Association, in conjunction with the Attorney General. I also said the following day that I met with the AMA. I acknowledged that I had made a mistake on the radio that day. In fact, I was talking about the MDA, not the AMA, meeting with the Attorney General. The head of the MDA was most accommodating, and is of the view that we now have what appears to be a workable package for country doctors and medical indemnity generally. Rather than listen to talkback radio hosts, the member for Murdoch should read the press releases from the AMA. The press release last week, after the meeting we had, said that the AMA was quite comfortable with the direction we were taking, and felt that a solution lay in that direction. We will achieve a solution, but, as the Premier quite rightly points out - and this is the importance of the meeting tomorrow - the federal role in all of this needs to be recognised. The Government will put together a package that will suit our doctors, but there is also a national responsibility that affects this whole nation.