

GERALDTON REGIONAL HOSPITAL, FUNDING

241. Mr EDWARDS to the Minister for Health:

Given Labor's promise that a key initiative for Geraldton will be ensuring that \$35 million is provided for the long-awaited redevelopment of the Geraldton Regional Hospital, will the minister give an unqualified commitment to provide full funding for the hospital in this year's budget?

Mr KUCERA replied:

I thank the member for his question. I also thank members on the other side, particularly the member for Moore, who took me to Moora the other day. I had a very pleasant day there. I saw some of the problems being experienced by the hospital in his electorate. I intend to visit the Geraldton Regional Hospital next week when Cabinet meets in Geraldton. I have already been to Katanning, and I will be at Wagin on Saturday.

Dr Gallop: There are too many Liberal-National seats there, minister. I had better look at your itinerary.

Mr KUCERA: I take very seriously the commitment the Premier expects of me, as a member of his Government, to make sure that I represent everybody in this State, in particular the people in the country. There is an issue with the equitable supply of health, and I take that on notice.

The budget is still being formalised. The Government is in the process of giving the hospitals their budgets. Most of them are now with their bilaterals, and the Government is looking at what the capital works program should be. The capital works program is being re-examined, and, at the end of the day, Labor's commitments are being put first.

Another issue is that many areas in this State are in desperate need of assistance. Those needs must be fulfilled, but they will only be fulfilled when the budget is brought down. As is the tradition, I will not commit to budget announcements, particularly those that concern capital works issues, until the budget has been formalised.