

CENTRAL WAIT LIST BUREAU, FUNDING

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

I refer the minister to his statement last night on radio 6PR that \$25 million allocated to the Central Wait List Bureau by the former Government will stay in the health budget.

- (1) Will the minister guarantee that the Central Wait List Bureau will receive all of that funding?
- (2) Will the minister also guarantee the House that no portion of the funding will be allocated to any other part of the health portfolio?

**Mr KUCERA replied:**

- (1)-(2) I thank the member for some notice of this question. I noticed his absence from the launch of a new program for mental health this morning in Fremantle. It is an excellent program.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr KUCERA: I was just making sure that the member for Murdoch and other opposition members were awake. I listened with interest to what the member said on the radio last evening. Yet again, he made allegations that something is closing in the health system. I contacted the Central Wait List Bureau today. It is very concerned about rumours that that great organisation will be closed. I do not know whether that came from the member for Murdoch. It is yet another example of the type of denigration about our great health system that is occurring in this State.

A great deal is being made of the money supposedly put in by the previous Government. I understand that the money came from the Medicare agreement with the federal Government. That is the case. As the member for Murdoch well knows, \$23 million left from the five-year program is in the budget. The program is in its last year. The Government has topped up that amount by \$2 million to bring it up to \$25 million. I put on record yesterday my appreciation of Michelle Wilkie and the work she is doing with her team at the Central Wait List Bureau. As of 30 November, the number of people on the waiting list for non-teaching hospitals was 5 442, a decrease from the same time in October. Almost 19 per cent of the patients on the waiting list are booked for admission in the next few weeks. For teaching hospitals, the number of people on the waiting list was 9 968. That figure represents an increase of 37 cases from the previous month. The figure is not surprising in view of what has been going on in our major teaching hospitals this year. Overall, the number of people on waiting lists this year is the lowest we have seen in this State for seven years. Money has already been allocated in the health budget - \$12 million has already been spent by the Central Wait List Bureau. The money has already been configured through the health system. As the member for Murdoch knows, there is a mix and match in the way we give money to hospitals and the way it is managed. The Central Wait List Bureau is not just about putting more money into the health system. It is not about creating a more expensive health system. It is about managing the way we deal with issues in hospitals. It is managing well and it will continue to manage well.