

NURSES, NUMBER AND RESIGNATIONS

1169. Mr C.J. Barnett to the Minister for Health

- (1) How many enrolled nurses were employed by the Health Department in the following financial years –
 - (a) 1999-2000;
 - (b) 2000-2001; and
 - (c) 2001-2002?
- (2) How many enrolled nurses were employed by the Health Department as at –
 - (a) 1 January 2000;
 - (b) 1 January 2001;
 - (c) 1 January 2002; and
 - (d) 1 January 2003?
- (3) How many enrolled nurses left the employ of the Health Department in the following financial years –
 - (a) 1999-2000;
 - (b) 2000-2001; and
 - (c) 2001-2002?

Mr R.C. KUCERA replied:

I assume that these questions relate to the number of Enrolled Nurses employed in the Government Health Services as the Department of Health does not directly employ any Enrolled Nurses in the capacity of an Enrolled Nurse.

For the purpose of this response the following Enrolled Nurse numbers have been collected from a 'head count' as opposed to full time equivalent enrolled nursing positions. It is important to note that an enrolled nurse may be employed at two or more different health sites but will appear in these figures as one Enrolled Nurse.

1.
 - (a) 2254
 - (b) 2196
 - (c) 2265
2.
 - (a) 1868
 - (b) 1813
 - (c) 1896
 - (d) 2018
3. It should be noted that the overall nursing workforce is ageing. At the 1986 census, 23.3% of nurses were aged under 25. This figure had fallen to 7.7% while the proportion of nurses aged 45 years or more had increased to 30.3% by 1999 as reported in the Australian Institute of Health Workforce (2001) Nursing Labour Force 1999, AIHW Catalogue No. HWL 20, Canberra. It is worth noting, a significant number of Enrolled Nurses have undertaken the Enrolled Nurse to Registered Nurse conversion course which will also impact upon the number of Enrolled Nurses recorded as leaving the public system. There are currently 80 Enrolled Nurses enrolled at Curtin University undertaking the conversion course to become Registered Nurses.

Health workers, including Enrolled Nurses may leave the employ of one public health service but commence work with another. The number of Enrolled Nurses who have left the employ of public health services entirely are:

- (a) 257
- (b) 228
- (c) 273