

VASSE LEEUWIN HEALTH SERVICE, BUDGET CUT

**507. Mr MASTERS to the Minister for Health:**

I refer the minister to his unequivocal statement in this House on 28 August 2001 that his Government did not have plans to cut the budget of the Vasse Leeuwin Health Service.

- (1) Is the minister aware that despite the service's total budget increase of \$920 000 in 2001-02 -
  - (a) award rate increases at this service alone equate to \$1 million;
  - (b) there is no funding for the position of director of population health, equating to \$150 000; and
  - (c) inflation costs alone will equate to \$200 000?
- (2) Can the minister confirm that the Chairman of the Vasse Leeuwin Health Service has resigned? I have a copy of his letter of resignation with me.

Dr Gallop: I am sure you do.

Mr MASTERS: I will ask the question again.

Several members interjected.

Mr MASTERS: We are talking about the misleading of Parliament.

Dr Gallop: Trust funds might be more interesting.

Mr MASTERS: Can the minister confirm that the Chairman of the Vasse Leeuwin Health Service has resigned over what ultimately equates to a \$1.3 million cut to his budget?

**Mr KUCERA replied:**

- (1)-(2) I do not know how many times I must answer questions about the budget, particularly the parts relating to rural areas. We committed an additional eight per cent, or \$30 million, to rural budgets this year. The Vasse Leeuwin and Bunbury Health Services did not miss out. I recently met with John Edwards, who I think is the person who has submitted his resignation. I met with the rural budget people, the health service board and the general managers in Bunbury, and told them that their budget clearly shows an increase in money. It is beyond me how that can be equated to a cut in funding.

Mr Board: You loaded the budget with extra things that they must pay for. You transferred all the costs.

Mr KUCERA: Each and every one of us must run our own budgets, as should the hospitals. Of the \$68 million increase in recurrent funding, almost half - \$30 million - went to rural services. It is beyond me how that can be construed as a bad news story.