

COUNTRY HEALTH BOARDS, ABOLITION

820. Mr TRENORDEN to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Will the minister admit to this House that he intends to abolish all country health boards?
- (2) Will the minister confirm that he has a hit list of country hospitals and services that will be closed or downgraded after the boards have been abolished?
- (3) Will the minister reveal the name of the Labor Party policy that states, "Part of restoring government's role in regional areas is to ensure that people living in them have adequate opportunity to be consulted and heard in government decision making that affects them"?

Mr KUCERA replied:

- (1)-(3) Since the Health Administrative Review Committee report, the Government has made no secret of the fact that it intends to move forward in the rationalisation of boards, which is exactly what the previous Government did.

Mr Omodei interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, member for Warren-Blackwood!

Mr KUCERA: I remind members on the other side of the House, including the Leader of the National Party, that the process of rationalisation in the upper great southern was started by the previous health minister. As for a hit list of hospitals, that is just a scaremongering tactic. The Leader of the National Party seems to delight in using these tactics. I would be delighted if the Leader of the National Party would provide me with such a list. I am not aware of the Government having any such list. That is not to say that we are not working with all the health authorities. I am pleased that country Liberal Party members have organised talks between me and the boards in order that we work through some of the rationalisation issues. At the end of the day, the Labor Party's policy is to provide an excellent health service in this State. We will work towards that. On a couple of occasions, I have used in this House the old saying - I know it is a cliché - that insanity is doing things the same way and expecting everything to improve. Each time the Government moves forward to improve the lot of people across the State, we get a cacophony of noise from the other side of the House. At the end of the day, we must try to achieve better health services and not frighten people with nonsense about a so-called hit list.