

NURSE SHORTAGE, LABOR ELECTION PROMISE

82. Mr BOARD to the Minister for Health:

We are well aware of the minister's commitment during the election campaign to recruit 400 additional nurses for Western Australian public hospitals. That is probably a hollow promise, given the 1 000 vacancies that now exist. In view of the chronic need for new nurses and the length of time that will be required to train those nurses, what is the minister doing now to fill that shortage of nurses, and how will he prevent the hospitals from becoming critically short of nurses in the next two years?

Mr KUCERA replied:

I thank the member for the question, but I also ask him to look at our election promises. Our election promises did not include recruiting 400 additional nurses. That matter has come up during the current enterprise bargaining agreement negotiations. The principal thing I must do as Minister for Health is try to restore some of the trust between the Government and the nurses that the former Government lost.

Government members: Hear, hear!