

PUBLIC HOSPITALS, QUALITY AND SAFETY ACCREDITATION

839. Mr M.F. BOARD to the Minister for Health:

I refer the minister to the budget estimates supplementary information supplied by the Department of Health in 2002, which stated -

In 2002/03 the Department of Health will develop a system-wide policy for accreditation.

- (1) Will the minister confirm that, according to the 2003-04 budget papers, one-third of Western Australia's public hospitals have not received quality and safety accreditation from the Australian Council on Healthcare Standards?
- (2) Will the minister confirm that, despite his commitment, not a single additional public hospital received accreditation in 2002-03?
- (3) When will the minister act to ensure the safety of patients and the quality of our hospitals?

Mr R.C. KUCERA replied:

(1)-(2) Yes.

- (3) The hospitals themselves enter into accreditation, which does not in any way denigrate or take away from the fact that hospitals are run at the standard expected by the department and, indeed, at the standard set by the federal Government. Accreditation is a long drawn-out process, which many small hospitals will never enter into because on the broad issues there is absolutely no need for it to occur.

Mr M.F. Board: That is not true.

Mr R.C. KUCERA: The member for Murdoch knows it is true. That is the only thing the member for Murdoch can find to criticise in the budget papers relating to the 641-odd health services in this State, which range from nursing posts right through to some of the best hospitals in this country.

The Premier and I had the great pleasure yesterday evening of hosting the Director General of Health from Dubai and the group that he brought with him. Their comments were most complimentary about not only Royal Perth Hospital and the major hospitals they visited here but also the staff; world-class was the phrase he used. In fact, the Director General of Health is hoping very much that some of Dubai's senior clinicians are able to make themselves available to train in our State. I do not resile from the fact that some hospitals have not sought accreditation. As I said, some will never seek accreditation, particularly the smaller country hospitals. The main issue is that we are redeveloping the mess that was left by the member for Murdoch and members on his side. We now have better hospitals and more nurses.