

NURSES, SHORTAGE AND COST

1654. Dr Constable to the Minister for Health

- (1) What is the current estimated shortage of nurses (in FTEs) in Western Australia?
- (2) How many nurses (FTEs) are employed -
 - (a) directly by the State;
 - (b) in the private sector; and
 - (c) by agencies, but working in WA public hospitals?
- (3) What is the total cost of employing nurses in Western Australian public hospitals?
- (4) What is the cost of hiring agency nurses to work in Western Australian public hospitals?
- (5) What is the estimated number of trained nurses who have left the nursing profession to pursue other careers?

Mr KUCERA replied:

1. The nursing shortage in the private sector is not known. The nursing shortage in the Government Health System has been estimated utilising the Nursing Workloads Decision (Australian Industrial Relations Commission) as approximately 400 FTE above the current establishment.
2.
 - (a) Approximately 8,500 FTE nurses (including Registered and Enrolled Nurses) as at February 2002, employed by WA Government Health Services.
 - (b) FTE figures are not available. In 1999 there were approximately 5,300 people employed as Registered or Enrolled Nurses in the private sector based on the responses to the 1999 nursing labour force survey.
 - (c) As at February 2002 there were approximately 440 FTE agency nurses working in WA public hospitals as Registered or Enrolled Nurses.
3. Approximately \$391.1 million in the 2000/2001 financial year (including Registered and Enrolled Nurses).
4. Agency Nursing Staff (Registered & Enrolled Nurses) accounted for 4% of the nursing workforce in 2000/2001 financial year and cost \$26.5 million.
5. Based on the 70% of responses to the 1999 nursing labour force survey there were approximately 280 nurses who indicated they were not employed in the nursing profession and employed in other occupations and had no intention of working in nursing.