

NURSE SHORTAGE, LABOR ELECTION PROMISE

83. Mr BOARD to the Minister for Health:

I ask a supplementary question. My question was quite straightforward: what is the minister doing now - today and this week - to recruit nurses?

Mr KUCERA replied:

I think I have answered that. In any case, as the member will be well aware from the visits that he is now making to hospitals - I am very pleased about that, although he is not yet getting around the wards; I suggest he do that next - we are in intense negotiations with the Australian Nursing Federation, and those negotiations are proceeding at the rate we wish. At least we as a Government have committed \$70 million to recruit 400 additional nurses. The member is well aware of that.

Mr Board: You know there are 1 000 vacancies.

Mr KUCERA: The member should let me finish my answer to the question that he asked twice.

Several members interjected.

Mr KUCERA: The member is making it up as he goes along. He is no longer the minister for cake and circuses. He now has a real portfolio. I suggest that he get out around the hospitals, like I have been doing, and find out the levels of trust. Out of a hard-won budget we have committed \$70 million to recruit the 400 nurses that we need. I come back to my original answer: the trust must be there, so it must be redeveloped.