

FREMANTLE HOSPITAL, MAGNETIC RESONANCE IMAGING MACHINE

**1037. Mr WALDRON to the Minister for Health:**

I refer to the Premier's comments in the House yesterday regarding the latest cuts to the Department of Agriculture's budget in which he said that government departments will have to wear cuts in order to fund election campaign promises.

- (1) If funds are limited and the minister is committed to a policy of transparency, will he advise whether it is a fact that, for the past 12 months Fremantle Hospital has had a specialist staff member and valuable facilities available to operate a magnetic resonance imaging machine that the hospital does not actually have?
- (2) If so, given that funds in regional communities are scarce does he think a country hospital would get away with that kind of mismanagement?

**Mr KUCERA replied:**

I thank the member for his question. Like me, the member for Wagin was not in the previous Parliament when the coalition Government was in power.

- (1)-(2) Fremantle Hospital employed an additional staff member following the announcement by the previous Liberal Government that it had provided funding for the purchase and implementation of an MRI at Fremantle Hospital. The staff member was initially occupied in the preparation of tender documentation and its subsequent evaluations.

That was done on the basis that the Blandford review of MRI recommended a further licence for this State. I remind members that that was totally ignored. In addition, not a peep was made by the coalition Government when that occurred. Nor was there a peep when the four private-for-profit licences were issued in this State but the licence for Princess Margaret Hospital for Children was denied, and is still being denied by the federal Government.

Furthermore, since the decision was made not to proceed with the purchase of the MRI unless a licence was obtained, the individual who had given up employment at another health service to work at Fremantle Hospital has been fully occupied providing day-to-day radiography. There is a shortage of radiographers and whenever one can be employed he or she is amply occupied. The radiographer in question also fills in other radiographers when they are on leave. The only facility provided so far is an empty room. Nothing has been done.

I reiterate to members opposite that the time is right for them to lobby the people in Canberra.

Mr Board: We are doing that.

Mr KUCERA: They are not. The member for Cockburn, who is a great supporter in this area, of not only the children's hospital but also Fremantle Hospital, showed me yesterday an article on the front page of a Fremantle newspaper in which a member of the Liberal Party from another place is actively campaigning against the MRI for the children's hospital and is not supporting the State of Western Australia against the people in Canberra who are denying us a fundamental right. I will continue to say, until these licences are issued, that that is an absolute disgrace.