

URGENT CARE CLINICS

514. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Minister for Health:

I refer to Labor's election promise to deliver urgent care clinics in the seats of Geraldton, Albany, Bunbury, Kalgoorlie, Pilbara and Kimberley.

- (1) Does this remain a commitment of the government?
- (2) If yes, will the minister today provide a time line for delivery of the clinics in each of the seats for which the promise has been made?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for the question, which is an important one. The urgent care clinic policy is about the work that we are doing to take pressure off our hospitals and to ensure that they have the resources they need to meet the demands of the population. It is one of the more complex election commitments that we made, because it involves us becoming engaged and partnering with the entire primary healthcare sector to bring it to fruition. Later this month, I hope to be able to make some announcements about a pilot program to test the issues of this policy. It remains our commitment to have a statewide urgent care clinic service, not necessarily because our hospitals in Geraldton or Karratha are under particular demand in terms of the performance of their emergency departments, but because we know that patients are better off being served in an acute primary health setting than going to an emergency department. We are making progress on this election commitment. It involves the integration between primary care and hospital care. It is a complex and important piece of work. We look forward to the pilot phase of that program happening in the very near future.