

HEALTH, VISITING MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS PROBLEM, FAILURE OF REVIEWS

779. Hon. C.L. Edwardes to the Minister for Health

I refer the Minister to questions on notice Nos 1572 and 1637 and the answer to question on notice No. 199. I also refer to the report in *The West Australian* on 6 December 2002 and ask -

- (a) is the Minister suggesting that no inquiry, taskforce, committee, summit or review conducted by the Health Department or any agency of the Health Department, identified or highlighted the problem of Visiting Medical Practitioners and their payment;
- (b) is the Minister suggesting that the 'Review of the Country Health Service', the 'Bunbury Taskforce', the 'Report of the Review Committee on the Future of Osborne Park Hospital', or the 'Health Administrative Review Committee' did not identify, draw attention to or highlight in any way the problems of Visiting Medical Practitioners; and
- (c) how does the Minister justify that with all the inquiries, taskforces, committees, summits and reviews and even with a staff of over 30,000 people and over 650 service delivery sites, no one knew of the problem of Visiting Medical Practitioners?

Mr R.C. KUCERA replied:

- (a) No, these problems were already identified and being addressed by the Office of the Auditor General and the Public Accounts Committee (PAC).
- (b) The Reviews identified were established to recommend high level health service and infrastructure requirements for the people of Western Australia, particularly country people and those of the South West, as well as the Osborne Park community. They were not established to examine accounting practices.
- (c) The PAC recently concluded that Visiting Medical Practitioners provide valued medical services to the people of Western Australia, while suggesting some areas for improvement in administrative systems. The current Government has been working to improve the management of the health system and has cooperated fully with the PAC review of these matters. The PAC acknowledged that the Department has commenced to improve its systems and processes.