

GOVERNMENT SPENDING ON RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

3699. Hon Margaret Rowe to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Science and Innovation

Given that the latest statistics from the Australian Bureau of Statistics reveal that the Western Australian Government's Expenditure on Research and Development (GERD) as a percentage of Gross State Product (GSP) has fallen from 1.62 percent in 1996-97 to 1.31 percent in 2002-03, a fall representing a decline in research and development expenditure of \$265 million per annum -

- (1) Would the Minister advise whether he considers the employment of an additional 13 200 full-time equivalent public servants, at an annual cost of \$1.8 billion, to be of a higher priority than Government expenditure on research and development?
- (2) Does the Minister consider the allocation of an additional \$72 million in the State Budget to fund the Government's new Science and Innovation strategy over the next four years as adequate to restore Western Australia's GERD to GSP ratio to the level of 1996-97?
- (3) Would the Minister advise what projects will be funded with the \$72 million allocated to the Government's Science and Innovation strategy over the next four years?

Hon KIM CHANCE replied:

The Minister for Science and Innovation has provided the following response:

- (1) Whilst Government expenditure on research and development is an important mechanism for broadening Western Australia's economic base, the provision of essential public services like health, education and community safety remains a high priority for the Carpenter Government. The recruitment of 1253 nurses, 447 doctors and dentists, 1544 teachers, 1655 education assistants and 251 police officers is of enormous benefit to all Western Australians.
- (2) The additional \$72million allocated in the 2006/07 State Budget builds on commitments the Government has already made. Including:
  - \$50 million for two new biomedical and health research facilities at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital and the planned Fiona Stanley Hospital;
  - \$4.5 million for a new Centre of Food and Genomic Medicine where biotechnology, agriculture and food technology scientists will develop new approaches to the prevention and treatment of major health issues, including diabetes and obesity.
  - \$21 million to the Western Australian Marine Science Institute, which will contribute to the understanding of Western Australia's marine biodiversity.
  - \$4.6 million on biotechnology-related projects through the Centres of Excellence program.
  - \$1.2 million each year on biotechnology-related research and development in crop biotechnology and animal and pest diagnostics.
  - \$850,000 each year to fund Nobel Laureates Barry Marshall and Robin Warren's roles as roving ambassadors for Western Australia's biotechnology industry.
- (3) Projects funded from the \$72million allocation will be announced over the next four years.