

ALBANY REGIONAL HOSPITAL — STAFF ASSAULTS

**502. Hon MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM to the minister representing the Minister for Health:**

I refer to a report in the *Albany Advertiser* of 12 May 2009 detailing concerns that staff at Albany Regional Hospital are at increased risk of attack from violent patients.

- (1) What is the number of reported assaults on staff at Albany Regional Hospital as at —
  - (a) 2006;
  - (b) 2007;
  - (c) 2008; and
  - (d) to date in 2009?
- (2) How does this figure for staff assaults compare with those for other Western Australian regional hospitals?
- (3) Has the minister sought or received any information from WorkSafe WA on the Department of Health's obligations under the Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984 to manage aggressive behaviour directed towards staff?
- (4) What specific measures have been put in place to reduce the risk of assaults on staff?

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN replied:**

I thank the honourable member for some notice of this question.

- (1)
  - (a) Sixteen.
  - (b) Seventeen.
  - (c) Twenty-five.
  - (d) Six.
- (2) For the period 1 January 2008 to 20 March 2009, the number of reports made of incidents in which assault has been alleged were: goldfields 30; great southern, 53; Kimberley, zero; mid-west 19; Pilbara, 23; south west, 38; and wheatbelt, 58. The available data is provided on a region-by-region basis and there is no ability to do a comparison from the current database with other regional hospitals across the WA Country Health Service.
- (3) The Department of Health applies the prevention of workplace aggression and violence policy and guidelines developed in 2004. The WA Country Health Service has adopted this policy and these guidelines, and these form part of a comprehensive aggression management strategy that is in place at all health sites.
- (4) The WA Country Health Service has upgraded by way of structural modifications the interview rooms in the Albany Regional Hospital community mental health building to improve emergency egress; has provided ongoing aggression management training in verbal and de-escalation techniques; has issued new staff identity cards that include emergency codes, including the code for violence and aggression; and has increased key-coded doors to restrict access.