

AMBULANCE SERVICE — LEVY SCHEME

864. Mr M.P. Murray to the Minister for Health

- (1) Is the Minister aware of the Ambulance Levy employed since 2004 by the Queensland Government, which provides regular and predictable income to the Ambulance Service and does not have the high administration costs that levies in other states experience?
- (2) Has the Government given consideration to a similar scheme so that Western Australia's ambulance service does not have to continually apply for individual grants to source Government funding?
- (3) If no to (1), why not?
- (4) If yes to (1), what were the results of that consideration?

Dr K.D. HAMES replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Yes the advantages and disadvantages of the scheme have been considered.
- (3) Not applicable.
- (4) There are many problems with the Queensland (QLD) scheme:
 - a. Not all Queensland residents pay the levy, which raises equity issues, as people without their name on an electricity account are not required to pay. Households with Pension Card Holders and QLD Seniors Card Holders are exempt;
 - b. All QLD residents are entitled to free ambulance services. Per capita usage is higher than in the rest of the country:
 - i. 178 incidents per 1000 people in QLD in 2007/08 compared with 136 incidents per 1000 people nationally and 82 incidents per 1000 people in Western Australia (WA);
 - ii. 154 patients per 1000 people in QLD in 2007/08 compared with 130 patients per 1000 people nationally and 85 patients per 1000 people in WA;
 - c. Ambulance service expenditure under the levy is greater than for the rest of Australia:
 - i. QLD ambulance service expenditure per capita in 2007/08 was \$94.12;
 - ii. National ambulance service expenditure per capita in 2007/08 was \$82.46; and
 - iii. WA ambulance service expenditure per capita in 2007/08 was \$49.21.

Western Australia's ambulance service is a user-pays service with full cost recovery for ambulance services. Ambulance service revenue is sourced through a combination of Government funding, ambulance user fees and third party payers. Primary ambulance services in the metropolitan area are funded through a recurrent 5-year contract with the Government, which purchases response capacity.

St John Ambulance Australia (WA Ambulance Service Inc) [SJAA] does not need to continually apply for individual grants to source State Government funding. SJAA do submit a combined grant application to LotteryWest for country SJAA sub-centres each year for funding for non-recurrent outlay.