

NURSES AND MIDWIVES — RECRUITMENT

73. Ms L. METTAM to the Minister for Health:

I have a supplementary question. How can the minister justify having the lowest number of nurses and midwives per thousand —

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister and members! Sorry, Leader of the Liberal Party. Opposition members have an opportunity to ask questions of ministers. Can that be done in silence, please?

Ms L. METTAM: Thank you, Deputy Speaker.

Is it not time the Minister for Health accepted that poor health FTE outcomes in Western Australia, which has the lowest number of nurses and midwives per 1 000 patients in the country, is a direct result of the lack of incentives and support for our workforce?

Point of Order

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The question by the member was several paragraphs and now, as a supplementary question, we are subjected to another paragraph. Supplementary questions are short and sharp follow-ups to the major question that was asked, and I ask that this question be ruled not in order.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order. However, once again, Leader of the Liberal Party, if you could ask your question, that would be great; thank you.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Ms L. METTAM: Okay. Is this not a result of the government's failed wages policy and lack of incentives for our health workforce —

Several members interjected.

Ms L. METTAM: There are so many questions to ask.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members! Member for Swan Hills.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: All right, I am going to try this again. Is everyone finished? Members! Leader of the Liberal Party, go again.

Ms L. METTAM: Is this not a consequence of the government's failed wages policy and lack of incentives for health workers in this state?

Ms A. SANDERSON replied:

Fundamentally, no, it is not, because nursing staff are flocking to Western Australia to work in our system. Medical staff are coming to work in our system. We attracted 4 000 FTE. We have increased by 4 000 FTE since we have been in government. In eight and half years, your government increased the number by fewer than 1 000—in eight and a half years. We have increased by 4 000 FTE; 1 600 medical staff and 1 700 allied health. People are coming to Western Australia to work in this system, unlike the Liberal and National Parties, which privatised large parts of our system. Does the Leader of the Liberal Party think that privatising medical workers' jobs attracts them to the health system? Does the Leader of the Liberal Party think that privatising their jobs to Serco attracts them to the health system? That is the opposition's policy and that is what you will do if you are ever, ever in charge of the treasury bench.