

HEALTH SYSTEM

354. Mr P.D. OMODEI to the Minister for Health:

When will the minister admit that the government has failed to fix the health system in Western Australia and apologise to the people?

Mr J.A. McGINTY replied:

Bring him on from both ends, Mr Speaker. What statistic would the Leader of the Opposition like? For the benefit of members, when the opposition was in government, there were 22 000 Western Australians on the elective surgery waiting list waiting, on average, five months for their surgery. The figure today is just over 12 000 people and they are waiting three months on average. Are there any other indicators that members opposite would like me to talk about? This government has slashed the elective surgery waitlist and it has slashed the time that people are waiting for surgery.

I will tell members another story. When I was shadow Minister for Health and was sitting opposite, every week I was able to get hold of somebody who had been waiting in pain for four or five years because there were 22 000 people on the waiting list.

Mr P.D. Omodei: That is rubbish and you know it.

Mr J.A. McGINTY: I used to bring them out regularly to point to the then government's failure when it came to delivering on elective surgery. It was absolutely hopeless. Where are the people today who are waiting more than a year? Members opposite cannot find them.

Mr P.D. Omodei: We will show you the waiting list. The 103 nurses are from your figures.

Mr J.A. McGINTY: I gave the figures to the Leader of the Opposition. I said that of the thousands of people this government employs in regional hospitals in Western Australia, there are 103 doctors and nurses short. I wish we had them. We have the money to employ them but it is a question of whether we can find the staff in the context of workforce shortages. It is as simple as that.