

CORONAVIRUS — HEALTH MODELLING —OMICRON VARIANT

7. Dr D.J. HONEY to the Minister for Health:

I refer to the growing outbreak of Omicron in Western Australia.

- (1) Has the minister used any pandemic modelling specific to the Omicron variant in guiding the government's response?
- (2) If so, how long has this modelling been in use?

Ms A. SANDERSON replied:

- (1)–(2) I will answer almost exactly the same question asked previously by the opposition. I wonder whether they actually talk to each other. Modelling has been undertaken by the Chief Health Officer and by the public health experts in the department who have guided us safely through this challenging period. Modelling, as I have said before, is one part of a number of parts that we need to consider when we are making decisions. It is just one part of the equation. Although modelling might be available, also other data is available that we need to consider, including vaccination rates, vulnerable people, people in our community who have not had the opportunity to get their third dose, and making sure children going back to school have had all their vaccinations. I will not, hand on heart, make decisions based purely on a mathematical exercise. We, as a public health exercise, have to take into account all those considerations. The member and the opposition can singly focus on modelling. Modelling will be available when it has a full dataset, but other things are at play right now that we need to take into consideration. We are seeing outbreaks in aged-care centres. We need to make sure that people in those aged-care facilities are fully vaccinated. The commonwealth has done two streams of vaccination programs through aged care, but they have missed a number of residents. It is fair to say that they have missed a number of residents, so we are reaching out and going into those aged-care centres to make sure those residents who want to be fully vaccinated with their third dose will get their third dose. We are also seeing antivirals being sent from the commonwealth. They are on their way. That will provide protection for those very vulnerable residents. Hence the sensible decision to shift the transition settings so we bought ourselves more time to get people vaccinated and protect vulnerable people.