

CHILD AND ADOLESCENT HEALTH SERVICE — CHILD DEVELOPMENT SERVICE

725. Mr P.J. RUNDLE to the Minister for Health:

I have a supplementary question. Thanks, minister. Considering that the government is some \$5 billion in surplus, does the minister think it is acceptable that Western Australian children must wait for up to a year and a half to see a specialist?

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please.

Ms A. SANDERSON replied:

As the member rightly pointed out himself, we have seen a 52 per cent increase in referrals. There is not the workforce out there to deal with those referrals. That is a fundamental issue. We are in a workforce crisis around the world, and assessing neurodevelopmental issues can take 12 months in the private sector. I do not know whether the member has any experience with children who have neurodiversity or getting assessments, but it can take up to 18 months in the private sector. This is not unique to the public sector at all. As usual, the opposition is not interested in the facts. Opposition members are not interested in the facts; they are just based on headlines or what is reported and what is reported is often not true or not the case, as the Premier demonstrated today. Member, this issue has been created by a multitude of factors. It is a complex issue that is across the public and private sectors where the waitlists are also significant. It is a workforce challenge with an increase in referrals, and we all have to work together to find solutions.