

AGED AND CONTINUING CARE DIRECTORATE — PROFESSOR LEON FLICKER

725. Mr K.M. O'DONNELL to the Minister for Health:

I have a supplementary question. Why are the elderly such a low priority for this government that Professor Flicker would resign, especially during the middle of the COVID crisis when the elderly are particularly vulnerable?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

How we treat aged care in the context of the organisational charter with the Department of Health is very different from how we treat aged care in the context of an effective response to COVID-19. As I said, the work that we have done around COVID-19 has been extensive and comprehensive, and it continues today. I met with the entire aged-care community last month at a forum at which we talked about the issues the industry is confronting and how we can better support it. I think the member would find among the aged-care sector that all would speak very highly of the close relationship they have with the government, and I thank them all for the great work they have done. As I said, Professor Flicker has been in that role for six years and I will continue to work with him. Aged care remains an important part of what we do in caring for vulnerable Western Australians. The fact is that the commonwealth regulates and funds aged care. The fact that we are seeing such devastating responses in relation to the deaths in the aged-care cohort in Victoria is a fundamental failure by the federal government to properly fund this area of care and health. That is entirely regrettable. Because of the great work the Department of Health has put into the aged-care sector during COVID-19, we would not see that situation occur in Western Australia. That is because of us and not because of the commonwealth government; it is despite the commonwealth government.

The SPEAKER: That is the end of question time.