

NURSES AND MIDWIVES — RECRUITMENT

102. Ms L. METTAM to the Premier:

I have a supplementary question. Given that Western Australia has the lowest number of nurses per 1 000 people in the country, is it not time that the Premier admitted that the problem with our hospitals is his government?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

I think the member is referring to some statistics from the *Report on government services*. As we have observed on a number of occasions, the ROGS covers a period of time; it was some 18 months to two years ago. It also does not compare apples with apples. Western Australia has the largest single health jurisdiction in the world and we have a widely dispersed population. That means that the proportion of healthcare workers to patients and other staffing cohorts is often skewed because a lot of nurses work in regional Western Australia. Obviously, when we are compared with a jurisdiction such as Victoria, there are very different outcomes, but we know that we are providing great health care for Western Australians. Can we do better? Always. Do we have a plan to continue to improve and make sure that our health system is one of the best in the world? Absolutely.