

ELECTIVE SURGERY — WAITLISTS

231. Ms L. METTAM to the Minister for Health:

On behalf of the Opposition I would also like to acknowledge the sad passing of Ian Parmenter, OAM—Western Australian chef, broadcaster, author and strong advocate for the Margaret River region.

I refer again to the minister's comments in this place that there is no hidden waitlist for elective surgery in Western Australia and that the government is undertaking significant investment and reform around outpatients and outpatient referrals.

- (1) What is the current median wait time for first appointments to see a specialist in a public hospital outpatient clinic before being placed on the elective surgery waitlist?
- (2) Why did the government stop reporting this data in December 2017?

Ms A. SANDERSON replied:

- (1)–(2) Even the member for Vasse knows that that kind of question about specific data needs to be put on notice, so I request that she put it on notice and write it in a way that will enable us to answer it. It will be dependent on HSP and what region they are in. There is a bit of assistance for the member for Vasse.

I can confirm that this government is investing significantly in our health system. There have been 550 or so beds included in the system in the metropolitan area and the Bunbury metropolitan area; and FTE increases over the last couple of years of 4 000 nursing staff; 1 600 doctors; and 1 700 allied health staff. All of that significant investment has enabled us to carry out record numbers of elective surgeries. We are doing more surgery than we have ever done in the Western Australian health system. We are also reforming the way in which we manage referrals into the public system through GPs—GPs are a really important gateway—through our \$8 million investment in the Smart Referrals reform, which came through the sustainable health review. That is how we are managing those referrals and triaging those patients.

This government supports, invests in and backs our public health system.

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Ms A. SANDERSON: This government backs that in with investment in staff and beds and a 30 per cent increase in funding.