

NURSES — ENTERPRISE BARGAINING AGREEMENT

**865. Ms L. METTAM to the Premier:**

I refer to the ongoing pay dispute with our critical nursing workforce.

- (1) Can Western Australian nurses expect another Christmas without any resolution to the Australian Nursing Federation pay offer?
- (2) Does the Premier accept a situation in which Western Australian nurses have gone from being the highest paid in the nation under the former government to the lowest paid under his watch, contributing to low morale and shortages across the hospital system?

**Mr R.H. COOK replied:**

- (1)–(2) Once again, we hear all these falsehoods from the member for Vasse. It is simply not true. She comes in here with those sorts of remarks and puts them out there like she is giving grabs to an FM radio station, but in this place, the member for Vasse will be held to account. We will remind the members of Parliament assembled and the public every time she says these falsehoods and brings them into this chamber. Our nurses are not the lowest paid in the country. Our nurses are valued by my government. Our nurses do an amazing job on behalf of everyone in this state and provide world-class health care. They work in the best health system in this country—the WA health system. Our hospitals are performing the best in the country. That is something about which we are very proud.

We want our nurses to continue to receive great pay for providing great care to the patients of Western Australia. Ultimately, it is up to them to continue the negotiations with the state government on their bargaining arrangements. We continue to be committed to that process. We are working in good faith with the union and its members to continue to reach an agreement. But we have done more than that. In addition, we have already provided nurses with a \$3 000 cost-of-living allowance as an act of good faith in these negotiations, we have already passed on pay rises consistent with the public sector wages policy and we have committed to nurse-to-patient ratios—the biggest single reform in nursing in this state in the last 30 years. We are very proud of the work that we have done to continue to make sure that WA's hospital system is the best in the country. We know that having valued staff working in those hospitals is key to that continued work. We will continue to negotiate with the ANF and its members to make sure that we can reach a resolution.