

MIDLAND PUBLIC HOSPITAL — MAGNETIC RESONANCE IMAGING SERVICES

**638. Ms J.J. SHAW to the Minister for Health:**

I refer to those people in my electorate and across the eastern suburbs who have no affordable access to magnetic resonance imaging services at Midland Public Hospital.

- (1) Can the minister advise the house what a fully licensed MRI service would mean for those across the eastern suburbs?
- (2) Can the minister outline to the house the reasons that the federal government should match federal Labor's commitment to a fully funded MRI licence at Midland hospital?

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

I thank the member for the question and acknowledge her and the member for Kalamunda's tireless advocacy for the extension of the magnetic resonance imaging services licence at Midland Public Hospital, and also Hon Matthew Swinbourn, who has been active on this issue as well.

- (1)–(2) Health is the most important service that a government can provide. It underpins the wellbeing of people in the community, and that is true —

**Mr D.C. Nalder** interjected.

**Mr R.H. COOK:** That is as true for the people of the north-eastern suburbs as it is for any other people. It is important that people in the north-eastern suburbs have access to a full-time MRI licence so that those families do not have to travel out of their community and fork out large payments —

**Mr D.C. Nalder** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Bateman, I call you to order for the first time. I let you get away with it the first time.

**Mr R.H. COOK:** We do not want people to have travel out of their community to get to these important services. We are committed to making sure that we put the patients first and provide the services they need. I am very pleased to say that the federal Leader of the Opposition, Bill Shorten, shares our commitment to putting patients first. I was delighted to see recently that federal Labor has committed in government to providing a full-time licence for an MRI machine at Midland hospital. I know the member for Bateman is supportive of this because he has been nodding and murmuring and making positive noises the entire way, so I am sure that the member for Bateman is as bemused, disappointed and angry as we are —

**Mr D.C. Nalder** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Bateman, I call you to order for the second time.

**Mr R.H. COOK:** I am sure that he is as angry as we are that the federal government has allocated just five MRI licences in the past five years nationally. In addition, the member for Bateman would be outraged to hear that Western Australia, on a population basis, has the lowest allocation of MRI licences in the nation.

**Ms S.F. McGurk:** Has he done any advocacy?

**Mr R.H. COOK:** I wonder whether the member for Bateman has done any advocacy and I wonder whether he cares about the people of the north-eastern suburbs. His comments now are just showing his utter contempt as he makes smart alec remarks about essential health services for people in the north-eastern suburbs. I have written to federal Minister for Health and Ageing Greg Hunt to ask the federal government to match the commitment from federal Labor to ensure that in addition to the commitment it has made around backing our promise on the Kalgoorlie MRI licence, it will also do so for the people of the north-eastern suburbs. The Australian Bureau of Statistics census demonstrated that Ellenbrook was one of the fastest growing regions in Western Australia. The people and families of that area deserve a full-time MRI licence. They will get it if we have a federal Labor government come the next federal election. We are looking to the federal Liberal government to match that commitment.