

Question on Notice
No. 1563
Asked on 29 October 2008

MR HOBBS asked the Minister for Health (MR ROBERTSON)—

QUESTION:

With reference to work bans in Queensland hospitals—

- (1) Which Queensland hospitals are affected by work bans imposed by domestic staff?
- (2) How many volunteers have been engaged to wash the dishes and clean the floors in the hospitals in (1)?
- (3) How are proper standards of hygiene being adhered to and what public liability coverage has he offered volunteers in the event of a lack of hygiene control?
- (4) How much longer will the Government keep placing patients in our hospitals at risk in this manner?

ANSWER:

As announced by the Premier on 24 October 2008, the State Government has finalised a three-year wages agreement with more than 125,000 of its employees. The agreement reached between the Government and senior officials of the public sector unions means that there is in-principle agreement for 45,000 staff now - with the broad parameters, including wage rates next year covering about 80,000 staff. Queensland Health staff (with the exception of doctors, nurses and allied health professionals), teacher's aides, Main Roads and QBuild will be the first public servants to get pay rises under the new deal.

Queensland Health values the contribution of the large number of hospital and community volunteers who work tirelessly to provide support in the delivery of health services across the State.

As in previous years, Queensland Health has sought the assistance of a number of volunteer groups to provide support in maintaining essential operational services during periods of industrial action in its health care facilities. Such services include the delivery of meals to patients, dishwashing and delivery and removal of linen. Hygiene standards were adhered to at all times.

Queensland Health's primary focus at all times is on patient care. The reliance on volunteers in circumstances such as periods of industrial action is a 'last resort' option.