

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

295. Mrs L.M. O'MALLEY to the Minister for Health:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's \$22.2 million funding boost for an increase in mental health beds and improved services, including a new mental health unit at Fremantle Hospital. Can the minister update the house on how this funding will support those with a mental illness and deliver on this government's commitment to putting patients first?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

Before answering this question, I acknowledge the representatives of the Women's Cancer Foundation whom I have just had to lunch. It was a very good opportunity to catch up on issues around ovarian cancer.

I thank the member for Bicton for the question. It was delightful this morning to be out there making an announcement near the member for Bicton's electorate, of course, with the member for Fremantle and Josh Wilson, the federal Labor member for Fremantle—we wish him all the very best in the coming election. It was great to be in that electorate to announce a \$22.2 million funding boost for more mental health beds and support for people suffering from mental health conditions. The main allocation was \$15.6 million as part of the 2019–20 state budget to open a second 20-bed secure mental health unit at Fremantle Hospital. This represents a significant increase in the capacity of our acute mental health services, because we know that when patients are in our emergency department suffering from an acute mental health episode, the best thing for them is to get into a long-term mental health bed so they can get onto their journey of recovery.

This funding will boost the number of beds in the Fremantle Hospital precinct, and add to the current 48 acute adult inpatient mental health beds and 16 inpatient beds at the Fremantle Hospital campus for older adults with a mental illness. We are building upon the capacity of that hospital, which is a really important thing to be doing. We want patients to be cared for in their communities, surrounded by their loved ones and where their support networks are. This announcement comes on top of a \$3 million commitment to begin comprehensive planning to decommission the Graylands Hospital site, with a view to reconfiguring mental health services to reflect a contemporary and more appropriate model of care. This will come with some challenges. I have noticed already that because of the stigmatisation of mental health, we have heard some negative commentary around the idea that we should have more acute mental health beds in the Fremantle area. However, it is important that people understand and move beyond ignorance, by saying that this is about making sure we have mental health services in our community because mental health is everyone's business. This is a really important opportunity to begin the decommissioning process of mental health beds at Graylands Hospital, which is now a very old facility that has a very outdated model of care.

In addition, we announced \$3.6 million to meet a very important McGowan government election commitment—the development of recovery colleges. I want people to understand the importance of recovery colleges. Essentially, they use an educational approach to support an individual's recovery from mental health, alcohol and other drug issues. This builds upon a model in the United Kingdom where there have been extraordinarily positive responses. It is about giving people greater insight into their mental health issues and providing them with the skills and support they need to continue on their recovery pathway and to enable them to go on and live happy, healthy lives. They are really important announcements—\$22.2 million—and confirm the McGowan government's commitment to investing in mental health and Fremantle Hospital.