

HEALTH — 2017–18 STATE BUDGET

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

I refer to spending within the health portfolio, which the previous Liberal–National government failed to control, failed to rein in, and left out of control. How is this government fixing the mess and ensuring that taxpayers' money is spent more efficiently?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

One of the piles of mess that we were left with by the previous government was a health budget that was completely mismanaged. In 2008, during the time of the last government, just 24 per cent of the state's budget was spent on the health budget. By 2016–17, that crept up to around 30 per cent of the overall state budget. The fact of the matter is that the health budget is unsustainable. We are working to make sure that we get health expenditure under control and that we have a sustainable health system that can provide world-class health services. The 2017–18 budget provides expenditure of \$8.9 billion for WA Health, an increase of 1.4 per cent, and an annual average expense growth of one per cent over the forward estimates. That, Mr Speaker, is unheard of in the health budget over the last 20 years. In particular, the aspect of which I am most proud is the hospital services expenditure of \$6.4 billion in 2017–18, which represents a growth of 2.5 per cent relative to the 2016–17 estimated actual, and an annual average expense growth of 3.3 per cent for hospital services across the forward estimates.

One of the things we have to do is deliver a world-class health system within our means, and to make sure that we deliver those services efficiently. That is why we have launched the sustainable health review—a way that we can capture innovative ways of delivering healthcare in a manner that is within our means, and that delivers not only safe and better outcomes for WA patients, but also value for money for WA taxpayers. One of the things that we have done under the sustainable health review is implement a range of public forums that will allow people in the community to have input into how we make sure that we deliver health services better. As we said at the election and continue to say, we are putting patients first—patients who will have a deliberate say in how we develop our health system so that it is innovative, so that it is integrated, so we deliver a cultural change and—most importantly—so we deliver a health system that is efficient, world-class and delivers value for money.

[Interruption.]

The SPEAKER: Members, I am sure that everyone is aware not to have their phones on in the chamber. I do not know who it was, but I am sure that they are embarrassed.