

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES — STEP-UP, STEP-DOWN PROGRAM

735. Mr D.T. PUNCH to the Minister for Health:

Can the minister update the house on the McGowan Labor government's investment in step-up, step-down services across Western Australia and can the minister advise the house —

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Vasse, I call you to order for the first time.

Mr D.T. PUNCH: Shall I start again, Mr Speaker?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members, I will make that decision. Start again, member.

Mr D.T. PUNCH: Can the minister update the house on the McGowan Labor government's investment in step-up, step-down services across Western Australia and can the minister advise the house how these services will support those suffering from a mental illness, particularly those in regional WA?

Ms L. Mettam: How about the election promise?

The SPEAKER: Member for Vasse, how about you being called to order for the second time. It is not a shouting match.

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

I am very proud of the work that the McGowan Labor government is doing to improve mental health services in the community. We want to make sure that people get the best possible access to mental health services that they can in the communities in which they live near the loved ones who support them. That is why there has been a concerted effort to build the number of subacute community-based mental health beds in the communities right across Western Australia to make sure that people have those opportunities to get mental health care in the communities in which they live. Part of that has been to develop the step-up, step-down bed facilities in Rockingham and Joondalup, and they are both functioning very well. In addition, we are determined to make sure that we also develop the step-up, step-down beds right across the Western Australia community.

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Vasse!

Mr R.H. COOK: I am very pleased, Mr Speaker, to say that I will soon be opening a step-up, step-down bed facility in your electorate of Albany, where we are opening a six-bed facility.

The SPEAKER: That is regional.

Mr R.H. COOK: In addition, we are developing step-up, step-down facilities in the member for Bunbury's electorate, and I would like to thank the member for his support for that. We are also developing step-up, step-down facilities in Kalgoorlie, Geraldton, Broome —

Mr V.A. Catania: What about Karratha?

Mr R.H. COOK: And, member for North West Central, in Karratha as well.

Several members interjected.

Mr R.H. COOK: These are really important facilities. I want members over there to listen carefully to what I have to say.

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Vasse, I have called you to order twice and warned you twice. I can throw you out on two warnings if you keep interjecting, so I suggest you be very quiet for a little time so we can hear this very good answer about what is happening for Albany.

Mr R.H. COOK: These are very important facilities, but they are subacute facilities, as step-up, step-down suggests—people are transitioning out of acute care or are having to take some residential care just to rebalance their lives and get back on track. These people are not, as some would portray, a danger to the community. These people are important members of our community who are seeking the care of the mental health system, and it is appropriate that they do so.

I would like to just segue if I may, member for Bunbury, to the Karratha step-up, step-down facility, where we are having some problems getting community support for that particular facility. I would like to thank the member for Pilbara for his support for that facility. The original site for that facility was considered inappropriate, so with the help of the City of Karratha and the community we have now settled on a new place for this step-up, step-down facility and we are determined to develop it. But it is difficult to develop these facilities unless we have the understanding of community leaders and the community. It is disappointing to find members of Parliament who

on the one hand say they are supportive of mental health but on the other are quite happy to stir community anger and resentment about these sorts of things.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Minister, I cannot hear what you are saying. Everyone is shouting on both sides of the chamber.

Mr R.H. COOK: In terms of some of the community anxieties or concern in Karratha, I was disappointed to see some members not allaying those concerns or helping people to understand and destigmatise mental health, but stirring the pot and making things a bit more difficult for the Mental Health Commission to roll out these facilities. I was particularly disappointed to see a flyer being circulated in Karratha recently about a forum that was being put on, I understand, by a prominent member of the local community to voice their strong concern and opposition to this proposed step-up, step-down facility. What was particularly disturbing was that they advertised that Hon Jacqui Boyde, Deputy Leader of the WA National Party, would be there to support it. This is the sort of disgraceful behaviour —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the National Party! Member for Scarborough!

Mrs A.K. Hayden interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Darling Range, I call you to order for the first time. At least they are talking sense!

Mr R.H. COOK: We are determined to roll out these facilities because they make good sense for mental health. They provide proper care for people in the community. Those people are not a danger to the community. By and large, they are people who are sad and who just need some help to get their lives back on track. These are important facilities. We will make sure that we develop them in the communities in which people live. It is an important area and I thank members for their support.