

REPORT ON KING EDWARD MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

Statement by Minister for Health

MR R.C. KUCERA (Yokine - Minister for Health) [12.16 pm]: I take this opportunity prior to Parliament rising for the summer recess to provide an update on the implementation of recommendations arising from the final report of the inquiry into obstetric and gynaecological services at King Edward Memorial Hospital 1990-2000. Less than one year ago, the report was tabled in State Parliament and in January, a high-level implementation group was convened to oversee the implementation of its 237 recommendations. In line with the State Government's commitment to keep the West Australian public fully informed about the implementation, I have reported to Parliament every three months on the rate of progress. Today I am pleased to inform the House that since I last reported in September, a further 33 recommendations have been implemented. As of 27 November, a total of 132 recommendations have been reviewed and signed off - representing more than half of all the recommendations made. Of the remaining 105 recommendations, a large number have been substantially progressed.

This is very pleasing progress, given the complexities of the issues involved. In the past three months, King Edward has opened new ultrasound scanning rooms; implemented new organisational and governance committee structures; defined clinical privileges for each medical staff member; increased training, supervision and mentoring responsibilities for senior clinicians; conducted thorough performance reviews for medical staff; and developed policies on the management of post-operative haemorrhage - including management of fluid and electrolyte balance, and follow-up of important test results. In addition, new guidelines for medical staff incorporate 26 of the recommendations that have been recently signed off by the implementation group. The guidelines apply to all medical practitioners holding appointments and/or clinical privileges at KEMH and cover areas such as supervision and training of residents and registrars, responsibility for patient care, standards for patient records, performance appraisal, communication, confidentiality and consent for treatment.

These initiatives complement changes already made at King Edward, including the employment of additional clinical staff, increased senior clinical supervision, additional staff training programs, development and implementation of clinical policies and guidelines - particularly for high-risk situations and emergency procedures - improved reporting and review of processes for incidents and deaths, and the development of more comprehensive information for new patients.

The State Government has made a \$25 million commitment to rebuild King Edward Memorial Hospital. The new ultrasound rooms - the first capital works to be carried out in the ultrasound department since 1979 - represent the first stage of a \$7 million capital works program over the next 12 to 18 months. The Government is also committed to rebuilding the hospital's human capital with the appointment of more specialist personnel. In addition, I can also report that an operational review by the internal audit branch of the Department of Health that commenced at King Edward in September is now complete. The scope of the review was determined independently of the implementation group and examined the process of implementing the recommendations and progress up to 30 June, 2002. The audit report has been given to the Director General of Health for his consideration and I hope to provide more detail on its contents - along with another update on the implementation - when I again report to Parliament in the new year.