

HOSPITALS — EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS — INVESTMENT

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

I refer to the work of the McGowan Labor government in ensuring that Western Australia is kept safe and strong through its significant investment in hospitals across the state.

- (1) Can the minister update the house on this government's investment in upgrading our emergency departments, and outline how this is supporting the delivery of high-quality health care in our hospitals?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house how this investment is also supporting local jobs and local businesses as we recover from the economic impacts of COVID-19?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

I thank the member for the question.

- (1)–(2) It is an important one because we all know at this time that our emergency departments continue to be drawn on and the demand is high, but we also know that our emergency departments are our frontline workers: doctors, nurses and allied health staff who are performing outstanding roles for Western Australians day in, day out. It is important that we have a government that stands by them and puts patients first and makes sure that we can continue to invest in our hospital system so that it can serve the Western Australian community into the future. I am particularly proud of the McGowan government's investment in our emergency departments to allow them to continue to expand and increase their capacity.

In particular, I want to go through just a few of those infrastructure changes that have allowed emergency departments to continue to meet the demands of our community. Work has already been completed in 2020 at the Royal Perth Hospital, including the construction of two single rooms within the quick assessment care unit as well as the conversion of six critical care bays into single rooms, which will enable the emergency department to treat patients requiring isolation from other patients. Obviously, this is crucial in times of COVID-19.

We have already implemented a mental health observation area at Royal Perth Hospital as well as undertaking a \$1.4 million investment in infrastructure works within the Royal Perth Hospital emergency department, which will commence early next year, to enhance patient flow and provide better patient experience. This includes additional consulting rooms in the psychiatric assessment unit, increased treatment space in the quick assessment area, combined clerk and triage areas and an enhanced secure entrance to the emergency department.

Other hospitals are also enjoying additional expenditure. That includes Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital—our other very busy hospital. It has \$19 million in upgrades to enhance the patient experience and improve the safety of patients and staff at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital. That includes a new eight-bed behaviour assessment unit, which will improve patient and clinical outcomes for patients affected by alcohol and/or other drugs. Relocation of the ED fast-track area will help ensure patients are able to be seen within the ED without entering the ED main department; and a class Q quarantine room within the ED to improve infection control.

Mental health and COVID-19 respiratory illness and infectious diseases remain ongoing challenges for our EDs, and these upgrades continue to equip them to make sure that they can meet the demands of the future.

The member for Armadale, and perhaps begrudgingly the member for Dawesville, will be pleased to hear that our \$5 million upgrades to the Peel Health Campus ED are continuing and will be completed by January 2021. That includes a new fast-track ambulatory area to improve patient triage, new holding bays, a new waiting area as well as the addition of seven beds in the short-stay unit to further streamline patient flow.

In addition to that, the member for Armadale will no doubt be pleased that we will soon be undertaking an upgrade to the emergency department at Armadale hospital, and that is currently out for tender with construction anticipated before the end of the year.

Dr A.D. Buti: That's great for Darling Range, too.

Mr R.H. COOK: It certainly is great for Darling Range, member for Armadale!

Several members interjected.

Mr R.H. COOK: The member for Armadale is keen to hear that as part of the reconfiguration, a dedicated paediatric patient area and waiting room —

The SPEAKER: Member for Swan Hills, you are not in your regular seat!

Mr R.H. COOK: — and an enhanced short-stay unit for mental health patients, along with a dedicated respiratory assessment area will be developed, with works anticipated to be completed by mid-2021.

In addition to that, the member for Swan Hills, the member for Midland and other members in the East Metro Region will be pleased to hear that the St John of God Midland Public Hospital will soon benefit from a mental health emergency centre as part of a \$6 million upgrade to the emergency department in that hospital.

No doubt, the member for Geraldton—who has already jumped one political party and might join another soon—is excited to hear about the changes to the Geraldton hospital under the McGowan Labor government. It includes an expanded emergency department and a newly redeveloped high-dependency unit. These are great changes. But all these changes fall into insignificance compared with the massive expansion that is taking place at Joondalup Health Campus, which the member for Joondalup, member for Wanneroo and the current member for Girrawheen will be delighted to hear. This \$256 million redevelopment will see the emergency department expanded by another 12 bays and comes on top of the opening of the mental health observation area earlier this term. Finally, if that is not enough, and it is not, the member for Bunbury will be very pleased to hear that the emergency department at Bunbury Hospital at South West Health Campus will be upgraded with a fast-track area, including a new mental health observation area. These all go towards continuing to improve the services that Western Australian patients receive. We know that our emergency departments will continue to be under strong demand and that the great doctors, nurses and allied health staff who work in them will continue to be under pressure. But we know that in the McGowan government we have a government that puts hospitals and patients first, and makes sure that they get the investment they need.