

FIONA STANLEY HOSPITAL — SPINAL OUTREACH SERVICE

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

I refer to the new spinal outreach service launched today at Fiona Stanley Hospital. Can the minister outline to the house how this new service will change the lives of spinal injury patients across the state and support them in returning to the community?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

I would like to thank the member for the question; it is a very good one. This morning I had the opportunity to go to the Fiona Stanley State Rehabilitation Service centre to launch the new spinal outreach service. This service reflects our values about putting patients first, which is about our health system adapting to the needs of patients, not patients adapting to the configuration of hospitals. I would like to acknowledge the hard work of Hon Alanna Clohesy, the parliamentary secretary, who has worked very diligently with the Department of Health to discover and develop these new models of care. This essentially requires outreach services to work with patients who are transitioning from the State Rehabilitation Service back into the community after suffering a spinal injury. For the 1 100 patients around Western Australia with a spinal cord injury, this will involve the outreach service travelling back with them into the community, whether it is into the supported accommodation environment or into their own homes, and providing them with the support and the equipment that they need to live as independent lives as possible. An important part of what we are doing is saying that we do not want to institutionalise people: we want them to benefit from returning to live in their homes, with their families and friends, or in supported accommodation, rather than staying in a large institution. It is designed to empower and support spinal cord injury patients to return to the community after they have been discharged from the State Rehabilitation Service's spinal unit. This \$1.8 million initiative will allow those patients to have the sorts of lives that they otherwise would have lived. It will act as a consultation and advisory service, supporting patients to maintain their functional independence and achieve self-management after the life-changing experience of a spinal injury. I am very proud of this initiative. It really speaks to the values of the McGowan Labor government, which are about putting patients first and making sure that we adapt our services to the needs of patients rather than making patients fit into a standardised hospital model.