

FIONA STANLEY HOSPITAL — FAMILY BIRTHING CENTRE

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

I refer to the responsible financial management of the McGowan Labor government that has meant more funding in hospitals and more investment in services that put patients first.

- (1) Can the minister update the house on the \$1.8 million investment in a new family birthing centre at Fiona Stanley Hospital?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house how this will support expecting mothers in the southern suburbs?

**Mr R.H. COOK replied:**

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for the question. She is quite right. As the Premier said a little while ago, we have been increasing the funding for hospitals year on year, at around between 2.8 per cent and 3.5 per cent across the forward estimates. We can do that because of sound financial management. We can also provide capital funding for much-needed upgrades and changes to the way we deliver services.

As every member in this place would understand, great work has been done at King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women over the last 27 years at its birthing centre, allowing mothers with low-risk births to have their child delivered in the way that they want. One of the aspects of our putting patients first policy was to provide more choices for mums about their birthing options. We committed to the development of a new family birthing centre at Fiona Stanley Hospital to provide that option for mums in the southern suburbs. I am very pleased to say that the construction of this is coming along nicely to create a more home-like, holistic birthing centre. It has been designed in consultation with a group of mums who have utilised Fiona Stanley Hospital maternity services in the past few years. The maternity ward at Fiona Stanley Hospital does a great job, and this will be a terrific addition. Following a period of staff training, the centre will start enrolling pregnant women in the program from August this year. The new family birthing centre will provide women in the south metropolitan catchment with access to midwifery-led care, through their antenatal, labour, birth and postnatal periods, currently not available south of the river. The centre will also feature three birthing suites, two of which have inbuilt birthing pools and another with a portable pool.

This sort of facility is very different from the feel of the rest of the hospital. It is a really important aspect of the way we provide health care in Western Australia and because we want to put patients first—put the consumer in charge of the services they receive. It is terrific that we are now seeing the extension of a family birthing centre from King Edward Memorial Hospital to Fiona Stanley Hospital as well.