

**KING EDWARD MEMORIAL HOSPITAL FOR WOMEN, IMPLEMENTATION OF INQUIRY
RECOMMENDATIONS**

Statement by Minister for Health

MR R.C. KUCERA (Yokine - Minister for Health) [12.10 pm]: I am delighted to inform the House today that the King Edward Memorial Hospital inquiry implementation group has completed its work of overseeing the implementation of recommendations contained in the "Report of the Inquiry into Obstetric and Gynaecological Services at King Edward Memorial Hospital (1990–2000)". After the report was tabled late in 2001, a high-level implementation group, including independent members, was appointed to oversee implementation of the recommendations. I have since reported to the Parliament every three months on the progress of this group.

Of the 237 recommendations contained in the report, all but four, which require legislative amendment, have now been signed off. The Douglas report recommended changes to the Hospitals and Health Services Act and the Public Sector Management Act and the removal of inconsistencies within the Health Act and the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act. These will now be progressed by the Department of Health.

Key improvements include improved senior clinical staffing levels, particularly in the areas of obstetrics, gynaecology, materno-fetal medicine and neonatology - including additional consultant specialists and senior registrars; policies for the timely involvement of consultant staff in the management of medium and high-risk pregnancies and other conditions; enhanced training and supervision of junior medical and midwifery staff; a comprehensive review of clinical practice guidelines, with all clinical policies and guidelines updated and published both in hard copy and on the Intranet and, for the benefit of clinicians outside KEMH, on the Internet; new appointments processes for clinical staff as well as processes for staff performance management; best practice credentialling processes for medical staff; updated and improved processes for reviewing and addressing adverse clinical incidents with a focus on reducing adverse events; and the establishment of a new organisational and governance committee structure.

Of the 237 recommendations, 43 have been identified as requiring ongoing audit - a function that will now be undertaken by the hospital. Implementation of the recommendations will also be audited independently by the internal audit branch of the Department of Health, which reports to the director general.

The first recommendation was the referral of some cases to the Medical Board of Western Australia. These inquiries remain ongoing. Many previous KEMH patients made a submission to or gave evidence at the inquiry. I am advised that plans are now in place to provide feedback to those women on the improvements that have been achieved in the past couple of years. As appearances before and submissions to the inquiry were in confidence, KEMH will advertise proposed arrangements for the provision of feedback in a joint initiative with the Health Consumers Council of WA.

It remains for me to thank all members of the group for their dedication over the past 18 months, as well as to thank the hundreds of staff involved both within King Edward Memorial Hospital and the Department of Health. It has been a hard road for King Edward Memorial Hospital and I pay tribute to the many dedicated staff who have remained loyal to the hospital and driven the many changes that were needed to address the Douglas findings. Indeed, today marks a real milestone for King Edward Memorial Hospital - the beginning of a new and exciting phase for the hospital and the community it serves. The challenge now for the hospital is to sustain and build upon the substantial achievements of the recent past in order to continue to provide the high level of care that the community rightly expects. King Edward Memorial Hospital will also play an important role in assisting other hospitals striving to improve their safety, quality, policies and procedures. Indeed, many hospitals across Australia have sought to adopt the recommendations of the Douglas inquiry.

As members will be aware, the Government has made a substantial commitment to King Edward Memorial Hospital, including the provision of approximately \$10 million in recurrent funding to implement and sustain the inquiry recommendations, and \$15 million to redevelop key infrastructure in the hospital. With the commitment of the State Government, the staff at King Edward Memorial Hospital, the Department of Health and the community, I believe that public confidence in KEMH is well on its way to being restored to the high levels of the past.