

MENTAL HEALTH — INPATIENT SECURITY

115. Hon SALLY TALBOT to the Minister for Mental Health:

- (1) Is the minister aware of the recent findings of the Victorian Mental Illness Awareness Council that 45 per cent of women who are inpatients in Victorian psychiatric hospitals are sexually assaulted while an inpatient?
- (2) Given that there is no contemporary research in Western Australia similar to that undertaken by VMIAC, will the minister now order that research to be undertaken?
- (3) Does the minister accept that these findings add urgency to the longstanding demand by the Mental Health Law Centre (WA) for closed-circuit television surveillance recordings to be introduced into all WA psychiatric hospitals authorised to hold patients without their consent?
- (4) If no to (3), why not?
- (5) If yes to (3), when will the minister take action to introduce CCTV surveillance?

Hon HELEN MORTON replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question.

- (1)–(5) This has been quite a difficult issue that I have been aware of over a number of years of being involved with mental health services. Yes, I am aware of that particular report, and, of course, it was reported in the paper as well. I think I read it in the paper as well. It is of some concern, obviously.

As a result of that, I have asked the Chief Psychiatrist to review the recommendations from the Victorian Mental Illness Awareness Council report with respect to WA's situation and provide some advice to me on where we need to go with this in WA. There are some people, of course, who think that the only answer is to have separate units for women and separate units for men, but I do not know that that is necessarily the answer. In terms of CCTV, all mental health inpatient units have CCTV located in areas that do not breach patient confidentiality and/or privacy.