

INFANT, CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH TASKFORCE — RECOMMENDATIONS

**720. Mr H.T. JONES to the Minister for Mental Health:**

I refer to the Cook Labor government's commitment to implement recommendations for the infant, child and adolescent mental health taskforce.

- (1) Can the minister update the house on the implementation of the taskforce's recommendations?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house how this government continues to grow its investment in mental health services?

**Ms A. SANDERSON replied:**

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for Darling Range for his question. I am very happy to advise the house of this government's record injection of funding into the mental health system, which brings the overall mental health budget to \$1.4 billion a year across Western Australia. That is a 50 per cent increase since we came to government in 2017—a 50 per cent increase in funding in frontline mental health services. It is important for a number of reasons. There is an additional \$82 million for hospital mental health services and \$24.4 million for the WA Country Health Service mental health emergency telehealth service—something that the former coalition commonwealth government cut, so we stepped in and the state funded it. There is \$200 million set aside for the Graylands reconfiguration and forensic taskforce and another \$35.5 million for the infant, child and adolescent taskforce. As we know, in 2020, the former Minister for Mental Health, now Premier Cook, established the taskforce into infant, child and adolescent services, which is a total rewrite of the public delivery of mental health services for our children and adolescents in Western Australia. It is an outstanding piece of work. It involves 32 recommendations and there are 100 members of the taskforce, including consumers and carers, importantly. A number of those key actions will be infinite and ongoing. It is about how we change our models of care and how we treat children and adolescents who are experiencing mental health issues.

We immediately committed \$47.3 million in the 2022–23 budget to uplift services and staff on the front line. We have implemented different models of care and introduced peer workers, which is new in Western Australia and has lots of good evidence behind it. We have enhanced the crisis response for infants and children, which will essentially improve pathways other than hospital. Inpatient care should always be a last resort for children in the mental health setting. It is always better to support families in their homes and at their schools and keep kids active and engaged in all those activities while parents are supported in that endeavour. We have had \$18 million over four years for an immediate expansion of the WA Country Health Service and the treating workforce. We know that kids in regional areas are the most disadvantaged in accessing mental health services, and we have had an immediate uplift of staffing there. Over the more medium term, we have \$7 million to implement the pilot for the infant, child and adolescent mental health service in Bunbury. We also have the crisis intervention team at the East Metropolitan Health Service, obviously the continuation of uplifted services and the expansion of the Touchstone service, which supports children aged 12 to 17 years with complex personality disorders. We are seeing a significant increase in diagnoses of those personality disorders.

It is only WA Labor that has significantly increased the mental health commitment by 50 per cent since coming to government and it is only WA Labor that will improve and increase the quality of our mental health services.