

STATE BUDGET 2023–24 — MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

315. Dr K. STRATTON to the Minister for Health:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's \$421 million boost to mental health services in last week's budget. Can the minister outline to the house how this government is prioritising mental health services after years of neglect and mismanagement by the former Liberal–National government?

Ms A. SANDERSON replied:

I thank the member for Nedlands for her question and her ongoing interest in and support for mental health services.

This government has made a record injection of funding for mental health services in Western Australia, bringing the overall mental health budget to \$1.4 billion a year. That is a more than 50 per cent increase in mental health services since we were elected in 2017. Importantly, in this budget is the very important reform around forensic mental health and the \$218 million commitment for Graylands Hospital reconfiguration and the important uplift of forensic mental health facilities for prisoners who have been charged or convicted of a crime and are suffering from significant mental health issues. We have known for decades that there has been a significant underinvestment in forensic mental health services. This is a really important reform and first stage of the Graylands reconfiguration.

It is clear that those opposite do not understand this announcement or the mental health sector. In fact, the Leader of the Liberal Party claimed that somehow the government was going against expert advice and called Graylands a Victorian-era asylum. In actual fact, she was quoting from a very old document that has been revised twice since then. What does that say to the people who are seeking treatment in Graylands now, which has both voluntary and involuntary facilities? It is our only tertiary psychiatric teaching hospital. It was a disgraceful comment.

Under the former Minister for Health, the government established the GRAFT task force, led by Jim McGinty, to align forensic mental health with the WA mental health alcohol and other drugs plan. It highlighted the need for decommissioning and replacing services in a more contemporary environment. The plan emphasises prioritising forensic mental health care, which is exactly what we are doing. We are following that plan and we are prioritising forensic mental health. It also recommended retaining and expanding the Frankland Centre and reconfiguring non-forensic inpatients to contemporise and rebalance. That is what we are doing. We are growing the Frankland Centre's forensic beds by 53 beds, including five for children and adolescents, which will support those kids particularly in Banksia who require inpatient support. It is the biggest investment in mental health in 30 years and it will provide a safe and therapeutic environment for those prisoners and those charged to recover from their mental health issues and face court, if that is the next phase for them, or go back to the estate.

The other comment that was made by the opposition was that this was going against expert advice and that somehow creating more inpatient units was the wrong way to go in this instance and we need to create more community-based facilities. I urge the Leader of the Liberal Party to google what "forensic mental health" means. They are inpatient facilities for prisoners and for people who have been convicted of a crime. Is the member suggesting that we put them out in the community? Is that what was being suggested?

Ms L. Mettam: Absolutely not. Get your facts right, minister.

Ms A. SANDERSON: That is exactly what the member said. She has a complete lack of understanding, claiming that we should be treating prisoners and those convicted of serious crimes in the community somehow. We will provide the appropriate investment and double our forensic capacity.