

PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH

Statement by Minister for Mental Health

MS A. SANDERSON (Morley — Minister for Mental Health) [1.07 pm]: I rise to inform the house that last week was Perinatal Mental Health Week. Perinatal Mental Health Week takes place annually in November and is an opportunity to raise awareness, provide information, provide referral pathway support and destigmatise perinatal mental health issues. Perinatal anxiety or depression affects around 100 000 families across Australia every year. Mothers and fathers can develop perinatal mental illness during pregnancy, during early parenthood or at any time in the first 12 months of a child's life.

The Mental Health Commission supports the Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Sub Network, which engages with and improves outcomes for specific cohorts of mental health service users. The network aims to be inclusive, representative and reflect the concerns and views of the sector for these groups. In 2022–23, the Mental Health Commission will dedicate more than \$14 million to fund postnatal and antenatal mental health services, including eight-bed mother-and-baby units at King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women and Fiona Stanley Hospital; the New Beginnings postnatal depression support program via the North Metropolitan Health Service; the department of psychological medicine, including the state perinatal mental health unit, at King Edward Memorial Hospital; maternity and perinatal specialist support programs via the South Metropolitan Health Service; and the delivery of four mother–baby nurture groups by Playgroup WA via the North Metropolitan Health Service. A further \$460 000 will be invested in perinatal support groups in Bunbury, Collie and Busselton, perinatal mental health services in the metropolitan area and a new program for fathers.

In the regions, the MHC funded midwest suicide prevention coordinators to run a local radio and social media perinatal campaign that used stories from the people of Geraldton to support parents' perinatal journeys. New or expecting parents and professionals shared advice and personal experiences to support local parents in accessing help and breaking the unrealistic expectation of perfect parenting.

This government is committed to prioritising the delivery of timely, quality mental health services. Perinatal Mental Health Week is an opportunity to support expectant and new parents during what will be one of the most vulnerable times in their life. I understand that significant challenges are faced during pregnancy and early parenthood. Support is available to those who may need it.