

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES - POLLING DATA

160. Mr P.D. OMODEI to the Minister for Health.

I refer to the government's attitude monitoring polling data in which it is revealed that 94 per cent of the people surveyed believe that under the current state government, mental health services have either stayed the same or got worse.

- (1) Given that the people who were surveyed as part of this polling are the same people who use these services, does the minister concede that this result is a damning indictment on his failure to improve mental health services over the past five years?
- (2) How does the minister justify his failure in this area?

Mr J.A. McGINTY replied:

- (1)-(2) We clearly need to be doing better in providing mental health services; that is the message. We already knew that and it was confirmed in the attitude monitoring survey that was done specifically in respect of mental health. That is the reason we have invested an additional \$173 million to meet those gaps in service that are so obvious, and have been for too long. It is true that over the past few decades both sides of politics have neglected mental health services in particular. We are resolved, with appropriate humility, to address these issues to make sure that the real needs are met. For instance, we are in the process now, and it will be completed over the next 12 to 18 months, of building 400 accommodation units for people with mental illnesses. We have run into difficulties, for example, with the Town of Vincent, which resisted the step down mental health facilities. We are determined to overcome these difficulties, as we have in the case of the Town of Vincent.

Mr T.R. Buswell interjected.

Mr J.A. McGINTY: In the member for Vasse's electorate the government will be building mental health facilities as well as a new hospital.

Dr J.M. Woollard: When are you going to detail that?

Mr J.A. McGINTY: Very close to the member for Alfred Cove's electorate will be the new Fiona Stanley hospital. Altogether we have committed \$3.6 billion, an unprecedented level of expenditure.

Mr P.D. Omodei: Nothing has been done.

Mr J.A. McGINTY: Approval is in place. Construction is about to start on the new hospital at Rockingham, the new hospital at Midland and the new Fiona Stanley hospital. Hospital facilities are being upgraded, not only in the city, but also in the country. A new hospital is already operational in Geraldton, upgrades are under way in Broome, Kalgoorlie, Bunbury and Albany, and at Port Hedland a new hospital is already under construction. We are identifying the gaps in services, and making sure from our tremendously performing economy that the appropriate resources are allocated to make sure that we use this unique opportunity to properly deal with and provide the health facilities that the community needs.