

PERTH CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL — MENTAL HEALTH UNIT — SEXUAL SAFETY BREACHES

**776. Ms L. METTAM to the Minister for Health:**

I refer to the minister's comments last week that two other breaches of Perth Children's Hospital's sexual safety policy occurred last year but were nowhere near the severity of the incident involving Florence. Does the minister agree that any breach of sexual safety is completely unacceptable; and, if so, why has the Cook Labor government failed to deliver a safe environment for our most vulnerable children almost two years after that incident?

**Ms A. SANDERSON replied:**

I am just trying to find my notes on those incidents. Of course we agree that a safe environment is critical for our children in our hospitals. It is a safe hospital and it is a safe ward. I have outlined in significant detail what steps have been taken, particularly in response to the isolated very serious incident that was reported in the media over the last two weeks. Of course, breaches of sexual safety are always serious, and they are taken seriously, which is why the independent statutory office of the Chief Mental Health Advocate investigates every single breach. It would not be investigated if it were not considered serious. Every one of those is investigated.

I made this point last week, because there is a continuous misrepresentation of information on the other side, including from the Leader of the Opposition, who stood up and claimed there were four sexual assaults recorded in the report. He should stand up and correct the record, because that was not what was in the report at all. He deliberately mischaracterised that to create fear and uncertainty about those services. A breach of sexual safety could be anything from words to showing someone something to a physical touch. It can also be consensual. It is a spectrum. They are all serious and they are all against the policy, because when people enter those inpatient units, they are told, "Don't go into anyone else's bedroom, full stop. You're not to go into other people's rooms and you're not to have any personal relations with other patients." Of course they are serious, and every single one of those is investigated and reported transparently in the Mental Health Advocacy Service annual report.