

HEALTH — MATERNITY CARE

**570. Ms H.M. BEAZLEY to the Minister for Health:**

I refer to the Cook Labor government's commitment to expanding maternity care options for women in Western Australia.

- (1) Can the minister outline to the house how this government is delivering more maternity care options for WA women?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house why providing continuity of care for Western Australian women having babies is so important?

**Ms A. SANDERSON replied:**

I thank the member for Victoria Park for her question. I have to say that I am very excited about this program. Members know that one of my focuses as Minister for Health is extending reproductive care and ensuring that Western Australian women have the same options that women have in other similar jurisdictions. I want to ensure that we still have excellent high-quality care and a broad range of birthing choices. That is something I am very focused on in this portfolio.

- (1)–(2) We know that the northern and southern suburbs both have access to a family birthing centre, but there is currently not an equivalent in the east. When I became minister, I wrote to all the board chairs of health service providers that deliver maternity services and asked that they provide improved access for privately practising endorsed midwives to allow women to have a greater choice of care. Credit to the east—they have gone one step further and have developed an endorsed midwifery model that is fully run in the public system. This means that an endorsed midwife will be a woman's midwife from the first appointment, to birth and all the way through to postnatal care as well. This is a genuine continuity of care model with outstanding evidence. We also know that it helps reduce rates of unnecessary clinical intervention. Western Australia has some of the highest rates of birth intervention and with that comes rates of trauma, stress and postnatal depression. When women are supported and cared for by skilled midwives from the beginning all the way through, they tend to have great post-birth outcomes

I was very glad to join some excited midwives and an excited mother who was about to have her fourth baby. Endorsed midwives are highly skilled practitioners—they require the midwifery qualification plus extra skills. They can prescribe—sorry, I am a little taken aback by what is happening here, Madam Speaker. Some forewarning would have been helpful!

**The SPEAKER:** Sorry, I will just interrupt for a moment. I did announce yesterday that I had given permission to staff to take photos this week. If we want to use photos in our publications such as the annual report or in our social media, the quality of a still from the video is not very high. I did say this week that I was giving staff permission to take some photos around the chamber.

**Ms A. SANDERSON:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the clarification. Apologies for missing that.

They can order ultrasound scans and prescribe and they have a high level of scope of practice. There will also be a midwifery hub, which means that midwives will have live birthing data, access to obstetricians and specialists across the east metro in Armadale and Midland as well. This is going to be a really important part of our maternity fabric in the eastern suburbs. There will also be two birthing pools to give women the option of water births.

This is part of an overall expansion of maternity care and maternity care models that we are focused on delivering for women in Western Australia. There will also be a world-class tertiary, maternity and newborn's hospital at the Murdoch site, the expansion at Osborne Park, the doubling of maternity graduates and the creation of a brand new family birthing centre. We are also delivering midwifery group practice models, which are also midwifery-led models of care, at Armadale, Bridgetown, Broome, Bunbury, Collie, Fiona Stanley Hospital, King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women, Margaret River, Northam and Warren Health Service. I want to thank everyone who has been involved in this. We are recruiting now and I am very excited to see this service up and running next year.