

MENTAL HEALTH — EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT PRESENTATIONS

208. Ms L. METTAM to the Minister for Mental Health:

I have a supplementary question. How can the minister say that mental health is a priority for this government when the Child and Adolescent Health Service knows what needs to be done to care for our most vulnerable children but the government is not providing the funding to deal with it?

Ms A. SANDERSON replied:

That is absolutely not true. The child and adolescent mental health service has received significant funding uplift. If the member had listened to the hearing, she would also understand what a difficult recruitment environment it is. It is a very challenging recruitment environment around the country. We are developing our peer worker framework and putting peer workers in our public system, particularly for children. That is very important, particularly for young people. That work is being led by Margaret Doherty, who is a very highly regarded community leader and lived experience advocate, and we are funding that work.

We have seen a significant uplift. I think it was around a 25 per cent uplift in staffing in the community CAMHS treatment sector. Some of those positions are not filled yet. That is not for lack of trying. It is certainly working hard to ensure it fills those roles. We have to fill the roles that are funded before we fund more. That is the way it works. We have to fill those roles, and we continue to rebuild a system that was left to rot for about eight years under the previous government, essentially. Those staff were not upskilled and they were not valued and the public mental health system under the previous government took a hit. Now we are rebuilding that youth child mental health system into a modern, responsive and really appropriate service for children who are experiencing mental health issues in a home and community setting. We are not bringing them into hospital or institutions, but supporting those children at home with their families.