

KING EDWARD MEMORIAL HOSPITAL FOR WOMEN — MEMORIAL GARDEN

Statement by Minister for Health

MS A. SANDERSON (Morley — Minister for Health) [1.24 pm]: I am pleased to inform the house of the signing of a licence between the board of the Western Australian Medical Museum and the Health Ministerial Body to protect the memorial garden at King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women. The ashes of nearly 40 000 stillborn babies who have been cremated at King Eddy's have been interred in the rose garden since 1989. Members may be aware of the special significance that the rose garden at King Eddy's holds for many Western Australian families. A monthly service is held at the memorial garden for stillborn babies, and it is a place of calm, beauty and reflection that bereaved families can access at any time.

Following the announcement of the future relocation of the Women and Newborn Health Service, many families expressed concern that this special site would be lost, and meetings were conducted with relevant stakeholders to secure the long-term future of the memorial garden. The licence between the WA Medical Museum board and the Health Ministerial Body will grant the WA Medical Museum board use and occupation of the heritage-listed building known as Harvey House and the memorial garden. This arrangement will ensure the garden is treated with the respect and dignity it deserves beyond the relocation of the state's premier women's hospital. The licence will remain in place on the understanding that the care and maintenance of the memorial garden will continue to be managed by the King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women memorial garden committee and the Rotary Club of Matilda Bay. The long-term future of the memorial garden and Harvey House is of emotional and historical importance to many Western Australians, and the state government is committed to protecting this important site.