

HEALTH — INVESTMENT

176. Ms C.M. COLLINS to the Premier:

I refer to the Cook Labor government's commitment to provide high-quality accessible health services for Western Australians.

- (1) Can the Premier outline to the house how the Cook Labor government is creating quality healthcare facilities for future generations?
- (2) Can the Premier advise how the northern suburbs will benefit from this government's reforms and investment in our health system?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for the question. It is a great question, and it was terrific to have the member with us for an important announcement the other day. The WA Labor government has ensured that our health system is the best funded in the country. We have the highest per capita spending on hospitals of any state—15 per cent above the national average. Since 2017, we have boosted that annual funding by 33 per cent. At the same time, we have grown the health workforce by 30 per cent, including 4 000 additional nurses and 1 600 additional doctors. A significant proportion of our investment in health is in the growing northern suburbs of the metropolitan area.

I was pleased to be in Joondalup yesterday with my colleagues, in particular the Minister for Health, to mark another milestone towards improved health care in the northern suburbs. Yesterday, we confirmed that we will be extending the Ramsey Health Care contract at Joondalup Health Campus to continue running services until June 2043. The new agreement has been some time in the making, but it extends the Ramsey contract by a further 15 years, providing long-term stability for that healthcare service. We know that the right settings—that is, the appropriate mix of public and private health care—significantly improve the way that we provide health care in the community. The extension of the Ramsey contract will provide it with certainty into the future. It has enabled Ramsey, in turn, to make a \$190 million commitment to the upgrades for the private hospital, creating a new state-of-the-art operating theatre complex and a 55 per cent increase in bed capacity. This is in addition to the \$269 million investment that my government and the federal government have made in Joondalup hospital to continue to upgrade its services. That investment includes a new 112-bed public ward block, on which construction began in December last year. It will also link to the recently completed 102-bed mental health unit in Joondalup, which opened in August last year. Combined, these works will transition Joondalup Health Campus into one of the biggest health campuses in the state. It is a significant investment to make sure that our growing northern suburbs have access to world-class health care.

Joondalup is one snapshot of a much broader investment in our hospital system, which is more than just infrastructure and staffing. We have had major clinical reforms, including the WA virtual emergency department, the State Health Operations Centre and the patient transport coordination hub. Last year, ambulance ramping reduced by 20 per cent compared with 2022, and it was down 44 per cent in December 2023 alone compared with December 2022. We are continuing to make the investments, to make the decisions and to grow our health system to make sure it continues to provide great health care, in this case, to the mums and dads and older Western Australians in the northern suburbs. We know that the population there will continue to grow and because of our investment and the great partnership with Ramsey Health Care, we will continue to make sure that health care in the northern suburbs is world-class for many years to come.