

PERTH CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL — MENTAL HEALTH UNIT — REFURBISHMENT

194. Ms L. METTAM to the Premier:

I refer to the Minister for Health's statement this morning that more than half the beds in ward 5A at Perth Children's Hospital would be moved to Hollywood Private Hospital later this year while works are carried out.

- (1) Given it has been more than two years since the alleged rape of a 13-year-old in that ward sparked a number of safety recommendations, why are those improvements happening only now?
- (2) What infrastructure, if any, has been put in place at Hollywood hospital to ensure the special safety needs of those patients will be met?
- (3) How long is this arrangement expected to be in place?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

- (1)–(3) I thank the member for the question. As the Leader of the Liberal Party and, indeed, all members of Parliament know, we have had a huge explosion in the number of young people who have been impacted by mental health issues. That has put pressure on our inpatient beds across the sector, and, in particular, in the specialist wards at PCH. As the member observed, we have reason to redesign and reconfigure that ward to make it safer; of course, most of all, we want to keep those kids safe.

We have a choice about whether we draw out this process or act deliberately and decisively and make sure that we keep those young people safe while we undertake those works. It is a very sensible decision that the health minister has made to utilise extra capacity beds at Hollywood hospital with the same staff. PCH teams will still do the work, which will make sure that we keep those kids in an appropriate facility while we undertake the works at PCH. I think anyone would see that as a commonsense approach and is appropriate as a way to make sure that we get on with these works as soon as possible.

Obviously, these works will take some time to implement. There was a review in relation to the incident to which the member referred. We have to then take on board the recommendations from that review. We have to redesign the facility and that has to be done in consultation, particularly with the Chief Psychiatrist. We then have to go about the process of procuring and the construction itself. These things take time. We want to make sure that we do it properly and we want to make sure that we continue to provide care for those young people while we get on with that work. Obviously, the opportunity to take up extra beds at Hollywood hospital where our teams will continue to provide that care is an important opportunity and I congratulate the Minister for Health.