

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Fortieth Report — “Petition Number 23 — Increase Number of Mental Health Beds in New Perth Children’s Hospital” — Tabling

HON SIMON O'BRIEN (South Metropolitan) [10.14 am]: I am directed to present the fortieth report of the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs, titled “Petition Number 23 — Increase Number of Mental Health Beds in New Perth Children’s Hospital”.

[See paper 2735.]

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Petition 23 called upon the Legislative Council to, among other things, “support the call for a vastly increased number of mental health beds to be incorporated into the new Perth Children’s Hospital”. The committee began its inquiries into this petition in December 2013 and held several hearings during its 15-month long investigation into the issues behind this petition. The committee has heard that the new Perth Children’s Hospital in Nedlands will have 20 mental health beds for children, 14 of which would be transferred beds from other mental health facilities in Perth, namely Ward 4H at Princess Margaret Hospital, and the Bentley Adolescent Unit. The committee has heard that the issue of children being treated for mental health problems is broader than merely the number of beds available in a hospital. The lack of primary mental health care and community programs for children and young people can have a flow-on effect to access to hospital beds, and the committee has heard that without adequate funding and support for community-based care, 20 beds at the new hospital will not be sufficient.

This report is an opportunity to draw the attention of the Legislative Council to the important concerns raised by this petition, and the committee has made several findings and one recommendation directed to the Minister for Mental Health regarding this issue. I commend the report to the house.