

MIDLAND PUBLIC HOSPITAL — MENTAL HEALTH EMERGENCY CENTRE

**940. Ms J.J. SHAW to the Minister for Mental Health:**

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's ongoing investment in services that put patients first and support those with drug, alcohol and acute mental health-related issues. Can the minister outline to the house how the new mental health emergency centre at Midland Public Hospital will ensure that those experiencing acute mental health episodes can get the appropriate treatment they need?

**Mr R.H. COOK replied:**

I thank the member for her question. It is not surprising that the member for Swan Hills would ask this question; she has been a tireless advocate for mental health services at that hospital. I was very pleased yesterday to join the Premier and the member for Swan Hills to make an announcement at Midland Public Hospital. The announcement was to provide funding to start the project for the installation of a mental health observation area, to be known as the mental health emergency centre, at St John of God Midland Public Hospital. This kickstart funding will ensure that we have the planning and necessary understanding of what is required at that hospital for this new centre. The centre will initially be based on a four-bed, two-chair capacity, but we will obviously make sure that the overall configuration meets the needs of people going to that hospital.

The people in that area are voting with their feet. There were more than 71 000 presentations to the emergency department last year alone, making it one of the busiest EDs in the Perth metropolitan area. Of those 71 000 presentations, about 12 people a day were there for mental health, toxicology and behavioural issues. We have an obligation, and also a moral obligation, to the people of that community to ensure that we provide appropriate treatment and care for those patients who come to the mental health observation area. We have already had great success with the mental health observation areas at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital and Joondalup Health Campus, and we have committed more than \$11 million towards developing a mental health observation area at Royal Perth Hospital.

We are doing these things because the nature of the patients coming to our EDs is changing. We are increasingly required to meet the needs of those who are suffering from acute mental health episodes or episodes associated with alcohol and other drugs. By providing these sectioned-off areas in the EDs, we are providing opportunities for quieter, more dignified areas within which to de-escalate patients and get them ready to transition to other forms of treatment to make sure that they can continue to receive the care they need.

This development is an important one. We know that illicit drugs and alcohol continue to have a high impact on our community. We know that the incidence of mental health issues in our community continues to rise, so we have to adapt our health services to meet the needs of the community. Thanks to the tireless advocacy of the member for Swan Hills, we are now moving forward to develop this mental health observation area, the mental health emergency centre, at Midland Public Hospital, and we will continue to improve services for people suffering from these sorts of conditions because we want to continue to make sure that we put the patient first.