

WOMEN'S AND BABIES' HOSPITAL — UPGRADE

**378. Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI to the Minister for Health:**

I refer to the tremendous decision by the McGowan Labor government to commit 65 per cent from the sale of the TAB towards building a new women's hospital.

- (1) Can the minister outline to the house why a new women's hospital is needed?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house what work is currently underway in planning for the new hospital?

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

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for the question. It was a great announcement in the budget with regard to the future of the women's and babies' hospital here in Western Australia. Members will be aware that one of the issues identified in the sustainable health review is the need to upgrade the women's and babies' hospital in Western Australia and move it from its current site to the QEII site so that it can be part of an innovative health campus and provide world-class health care for the women who go there to have their children.

We responded to the conclusions of the sustainable health review and have set aside \$3.3 million in this budget to begin early works with respect to the planning and development of that hospital proposal. It is obviously a fairly complex piece of work, because although we are moving a hospital to a constrained site, in addition we are moving it onto a site that already has an operational hospital, including Perth Children's Hospital. It will be a difficult project, but it is one that we need to do. This was identified in the early 2000s as part of the Reid review for hospital services in this state. The \$3.3 million is important money for early planning work, which I am very pleased to say is in the budget, but I am delighted that the government has decided to commit 65 per cent of the proceeds of the sale of the TAB to a new women's and babies' hospital. It represents an investment in the future of this state. There has been commentary about how it somehow represents services going to Perth; it does not. This hospital is a place where the vast majority of women in Western Australia—6 000 a year—go to have their babies. They come from all over the state, and, I must say, many come from rural and regional communities, particularly those from an Aboriginal background who are experiencing complications with their birth. This is a tertiary hospital that provides high-level care and we are making sure that we continue to deliver for women and babies into the future.

Obviously, on the current site, there are some heritage values that we need to protect. I want to assure the people of Western Australia that Harvey House and the memorial garden at the front of that house will be protected under any plan. I want to assure those parents who have used that memorial garden to remember their newborns that we will preserve that site to make sure that those memories are preserved.

It is time that we plan for the future for our health system. We have identified that King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women is in dire need of repair. I want to express my appreciation to the doctors, nurses and other staff who work there. It is an old hospital that has done a terrific service for the people of Western Australia, but it is now time to look forward. Thank goodness for the McGowan government; we are now starting to produce the resources that we need to deliver on that.