

PALLIATIVE CARE — SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

3010. Hon Nick Goiran to the Minister for Transport representing the Minister for Health

I refer to the recent debate on the *Voluntary Euthanasia Bill 2010*, and to the comments raised by several members on the importance of adequate resources for palliative care in this State, and I ask —

- (1) What has the Government done since it came to power in September 2008 to properly resource palliative care services?
- (2) What plans does the Government have to further improve palliative care in the remainder of this term of Government?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN replied:

- (1) In April 2009, the State Cabinet approved funding of \$14 million until June 2012, to set up the Palliative Services Project Fund. Palliative care development in this State is guided by the "Palliative Care Model of Care".
 - The Model of Care informed the decision to use this special fund for six key programs that collectively impact and improve palliative care for patients and their families state-wide. The six programs are:
 - the establishment of regional palliative care teams in the seven WA Country Health Service (WACHS) regions to improve palliative care access in rural regions;
 - the development of a state-wide paediatric palliative care team, based at Princess Margaret Hospital;
 - the implementation in state hospitals of the "Liverpool Care Pathway for the Dying" a training program to empower generalist health professionals to support quality care of people in the last few days of life;
 - a Palliative Care Workforce Development Program to plan for the future training needs of health professionals;
 - Area health teams in both the north and south metropolitan region to provide palliative care consultation in secondary hospitals, mental health facilities, correctional services, and residential aged care facilities that don't currently have access to specialist palliative care; and the development of a model to guide palliative care of Aboriginal people in this state.
 - The Palliative Services Project Fund is in addition to the Department of Health, funding for specialist palliative care facilities in both the public and private health sector.
- (2) The WA Cancer and Palliative Care Network is working in collaboration with metropolitan and rural area health services to implement and evaluate the Palliative Services Project Fund. The program evaluation will determine the ongoing needs to help plan for the sustainability of the current programs and the expected increased demand for palliative care services, due in part to the aging population and population growth.

The Government has an ongoing commitment to fund palliative care services so that people with a terminal illness can access quality palliative care and have the choice to be cared for in their local community and in their own homes.