

STATE BUDGET 2010–11 — ABORIGINAL HEALTH FUNDING

261. Mrs L.M. HARVEY to the Minister for Indigenous Affairs:

I first want to acknowledge the children from Hocking Primary School in the member for Wanneroo's electorate who are in the gallery at the moment.

Today is Sorry Day, and tomorrow is the commencement of Reconciliation Week. Can the minister outline to the house the measures that the government has put in the budget to improve the conditions for Aboriginal people in this state?

Dr K.D. HAMES replied:

I thank the member for the question. Today is Sorry Day. Members will notice I am wearing what I thought was a poppy, but I am reliably informed by guests in the gallery that it is a hibiscus. I am also wearing a good Aboriginal tie from the Aboriginal store in town. Today is Sorry Day, in recognition of Aboriginal people, and tomorrow is the commencement of Reconciliation Week. A lot is happening in that space, both at state and local government level. The City of Perth is holding a special day in Wellington Street. Aboriginal flags are being flown throughout the city. I think there is a growing sense of respect for Aboriginal people as we work towards reconciliation.

In our budget we have some particular funding packages. One package, which has been announced previously and was part of the Closing the Gap funding, is \$117 million of state government money that we will be rolling out throughout the rest of this year.

Mr R.H. Cook: The Aboriginal budget has been cut—not increased, but cut!

Dr K.D. HAMES: It has not been cut. The member can get to that in the estimates. An amount of \$117 million will be rolled out to Aboriginal people throughout the coming months.

Mr R.H. Cook interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, member for Kwinana!

Dr K.D. HAMES: That funding will particularly be used to address issues such as mental health among Aboriginal people, issues such as drugs and alcohol, and issues such as sexual health. We are working with the Aboriginal Medical Service. Instead of the WA Country Health Service having to try to be all things to all people in the bush, we are working much more closely with Aboriginal people, particularly great people like Sandy Davies in the Geraldton region, who runs the Geraldton Aboriginal Medical Service. We are working with people like that to expand the level of services that they provide across the state. I announced yesterday the \$26 million that will be going to ambulance services across the region, particularly in the member for Kimberley's electorate.

Mr R.H. Cook interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, member for Kwinana!

Dr K.D. HAMES: That will provide a large number of extra ambulance services.

There are some other specific programs that Aboriginal people in those remote regions will find very, very good. There is an amount of \$1.2 million for the Pilbara Cardio Vision program. That program will help Aboriginal people in the Pilbara who are suffering from heart failure and acute coronary problems. We are also putting in more than \$40 million for mental health programs, \$35 million to improve access to primary care, and \$17 million for early childhood development. Those programs will assist in recognising the needs of Aboriginal people in this state.

Mr R.H. Cook interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Kwinana, I hope you are going to ask a question today. I look forward to your questions. But at this stage I formally call you for the first time.

Dr K.D. HAMES: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Rather than take any note of those vacant interjections, I will be more than happy to deal with them when we get to estimates, when all those questions will have very clear and easily understood answers.

This is about putting in a lot of money to assist Aboriginal people. One of the things that I am particularly pleased about is the \$22 million from royalties for regions to provide remote Aboriginal health clinics. We went to Mullen and had a lot of consultation with the Aboriginal people there. The clinic there is in a tiny little donga. There is no separate area for men's health in particular and for women's health.

Mrs C.A. Martin: It is a little sea container.

Dr K.D. HAMES: Yes. It is a little sea container. It is totally inadequate. The first two will be in Mullen and in another community that we have not decided. We will be deciding where that money will be spent. More than \$6 million will be spent in the first year. We will be putting in place decent health clinics for Aboriginal people in those remote communities so they can get proper health care.