

ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER — GOVERNMENT SERVICES

497. Mr J.M. FRANCIS to the Minister for Mental Health:

It is great that this government is improving mental health services for the children of Western Australia. Will the minister please tell the house about new services this government has committed to for children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder?

Dr G.G. JACOBS replied:

I thank the member for Jandakot for the question and for his interest in this very important issue. Last week, with great pleasure, I had the opportunity and privilege of opening at Murdoch University the second dedicated facility in Western Australia for young people with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. In November 2009 I had the privilege of opening the first facility in Joondalup. The complex attention hyperactivity disorder service, as we call it, is located at Murdoch University and provides consultation, assessment and short-term treatment for children or adolescents up to the age of 18 years.

Statistics on the ADHD condition show that more than 5 000 children in Western Australia are medicated for ADHD. Although a part of a modality, medication is not the whole story in the treatment of children with this condition. We recognise—I believe in giving credit where credit is due—and the member for Bassendean also recognised, as he was part of the ministerial implementation committee on ADHD that, in fact, people, especially children with ADHD, require a multidisciplinary approach. Paediatricians, along with families and teachers, welcome this specialised team of professionals.

Particularly encouraging and pleasing was the inclusion of a school psychologist in the list of treatment modalities. There will be a school psychologist, social worker, clinical psychologist, neuropsychologist, clinical nurse specialist, senior speech pathologist and senior occupational therapist all in one location, because it is very important that we have that connection with a child's education; it is not only what happens at home, but also what happens at school. A school psychologist is an important part of this team and the treatment modality. Importantly, the service also looks at the causes of the child's complex problems. The facility is equipped with two family assessment rooms. No child comes in as an island, and we do not intend to treat children in a vacuum; the treatment will occur in association with their school and their family. This is a team approach to the treatment of this complex disorder. It will allow us to work together with the families to minimise the behavioural problems, which are quite disturbing; in fact, one of the major consequences of their behavioural problems is a disruption in their learning and their learning ability.

The service provides specialist training for clinicians. Registrars in the relevant disciplines, as well as teachers, families and other community members, will be trained through education sessions. The opening of this new facility is a further example of this government's commitment to improving and enhancing the services available for Western Australian children. I take the opportunity to thank Professor Louis Landau and the Ministerial Implementation Committee for ADHD. This came out of an Education and Health Standing Committee inquiry, which made some recommendations, including for a ministerial implementation committee and two ADHD clinics in Western Australia. It is my great pleasure that we have brought this to fruition.

In closing, I implore members on the other side of the house to ensure that their federal colleagues match Tony Abbott's \$1.5 billion plan for mental health in Australia, which would deliver even more facilities for mental health, particularly early intervention in psychosis, headspace facilities, subacute beds and extra training of mental health nurses.