

MENTAL HEALTH EMERGENCY RESPONSE LINE

**188. Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Health:**

I refer to Rurallink, which operates an after-hours telephone service for people in rural and regional Western Australia who are experiencing a mental health crisis.

- (1) From 1 September 2023 to date, on how many occasions was Rurallink not operational?
- (2) For each instance identified in (1), what was the reason for Rurallink not being operational?
- (3) What action is the state government undertaking to ensure that Rurallink is operational 24/7?
- (4) What alternative after-hours mental health crisis support is available when Rurallink is not operational, and how is this communicated to people who need urgent assistance?

**Hon PIERRE YANG replied:**

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. The following has been provided to me by the Minister for Health.

- (1) There were two occasions. These are the same two occasions referred to in question without notice 99 asked in the Legislative Council on 12 March 2024 by Hon Martin Aldridge.
- (2) Rurallink is operated and staffed as part of the Mental Health Emergency Response Line. On both occasions, MHERL was unable to staff the shift due to unplanned staff absences.
- (3) MHERL is funded through the Mental Health Commission to operate a service 24/7, including the after-hours Rurallink service. MHERL has a full staffing complement, and every effort is made to ensure the service is adequately staffed at all times.
- (4) Other 24-hour mental health crisis support is available through emergency services, which can be contacted by phoning 000 or hospital emergency departments. This information is provided through the MHERL and Rurallink answering service.