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AGENCIES PERFORMING WELL IN PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF PRIVATE PSYCHIATRIC HOSTEL RESIDENTS, BUT BETTER PROCESSES NEEDED

Auditor General Colin Murphy tabled a report in Parliament today, which showed that agencies generally performed well in protecting the rights of private psychiatric hostel residents and ensuring the hostels provided acceptable support and accommodation standards, but that some improvements were still needed.

Mr Murphy said the report looked at the Department of Health and Mental Health Commission and Council of Official Visitors, as each has a role in monitoring psychiatric hostels and ensuring the quality of accommodation or services is maintained.

"It was clear that the hostel residents benefited from having three agencies looking out for their wellbeing," said Mr Murphy.

"I was pleased to note that residents were able to access independent advocacy services and to receive help with resolving a wide range of issues," Mr Murphy said.

The report also found some improvements were needed.

"The Department of Health is not routinely seeking information to identify unlicensed hostels, and the Mental Health Commission does not effectively monitor whether hostels provide the services to the level and quality they are contracted to," said Mr Murphy.

"This is a serious and important issue, and I am encouraged that the agencies we audited have indicated they will do more to work together to look after this group of people."

The Auditor General's report '*Licensing and Regulation of Psychiatric Hostels*' (Report 11 – June 2014) can be downloaded from the Office of the Auditor General website at www.audit.wa.gov.au

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