

ALBANY RADIOTHERAPY SERVICE

**878. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Minister for Health:**

I say on behalf of the Nationals that we offer our sincere condolences to the Minister for Tourism on the passing of his mother.

I refer to the federal government's announcement of \$6.6 million for a radiotherapy service in Albany, which includes the purchase of a linear accelerator, a CT simulator and a CT interfacing planning and computer system.

- (1) Is the state government committed to fully funding the facility to house this equipment?
- (2) Has the WA Country Health Service managed preparation of a business case for the facility to house this equipment?
- (3) On what date can we expect a tender to build the facility to be released?

**Mr R.H. COOK replied:**

- (1)–(3) I thank the member for the question; it is a very good one. As members would be aware, there is a federal election in the wind, and there are promises of funding in different parts of the community. I guess it is part of that process—it is the season. From that perspective, we welcome the federal government's proposal to purchase the equipment associated with this particular machine. Some people have said that this is similar to providing someone with a saddle, but no horse. I think I have made similar comments in the media recently. Of course it is one thing to buy the equipment and machinery, which in this case is around \$6 million, is it, member?

**Ms M.J. Davies:** It is \$6.6 million.

**Mr R.H. COOK:** That is a great opportunity. But of course the lion's share of the expense associated with this sort of equipment is the bunker or the housing that we have to put it in, and of course the recurrent costs associated with running it. Our most recent experience in terms of funding the construction of a bunker for this sort of equipment was around \$14 million, which was the experience back in 2009 in Bunbury. Of course, on top of that we have the very expensive processes of funding the ongoing use of the equipment. The offer is welcome, and we are looking very closely at it. I have asked the department to analyse it and make sure, one, that it makes sense for the people of Albany that we are putting precious health resources into establishing the scanner in that community; and, two, that we can afford it.

In answer to the member's question about when will we be putting out a tender, we are a long way away from that, but, as I committed in the media last week, we are taking a very solid look at the proposal.