

KALGOORLIE COURTHOUSE

Hon NIGEL HALLETT to the minister representing the Attorney General:

Can the Attorney General please explain how the state government can spend \$31 million to relocate the Kalgoorlie courthouse to the Hannan Street post office, only in the wake of Australia Post's decision to vacate the building, given that it has failed to fund the \$500 000 required to appoint a second magistrate in areas such as Bunbury and the Kimberley where there are unacceptable trial waiting times of nearly 12 months?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. The current Kalgoorlie court, which is more than 30 years old, is too small and no longer meets the needs of the local community. The new Kalgoorlie courthouse will be a first-class facility that will restore one of the city's most historically significant buildings and will provide improved access and facilities for all court users. In particular, there will be secure facilities for witnesses, juries and vulnerable users of the court. The availability of the post office enabled enhanced design features to be incorporated into the project, including the provision of comfortable outdoor and indoor public waiting areas to avoid people having to congregate on Hannan Street. Also, there will be courtrooms with connected outdoor areas designed with appropriate cultural sensitivity that will enhance the environment for the delivery of justice. In addition, the availability of the post office building presented an opportunity to better preserve the heritage integrity of the entire Kalgoorlie government office building as part of the redevelopment of the site. The Attorney General is supportive of the placement of a second magistrate in the Kimberley and a third magistrate in the south west, and he requested the Department of the Attorney General to develop a business case for each of these placements. The Department of Treasury and Finance is currently considering the proposal.