

MIDLAND HEALTH CAMPUS — ST JOHN OF GOD HEALTH CARE

**311. Mr F.A. ALBAN to the Minister for Health:**

Can the minister please confirm that Midland's first new public hospital in more than 50 years will be provided in partnership with St John of God Health Care and that when the new Midland health campus is open that public patients will continue to be treated free of cost?

**Dr K.D. HAMES replied:**

It is a great day today. The Premier and I signed—in fact, in the Aboriginal People's Room—the documents relating to the contract between the state government and St John of God Health Care for the new public hospital in Midland. It is a fantastic day. It is a new 307-bed public hospital with 50 private beds. The member for Swan Hills will be very pleased, I am sure, to see the project get up and away. Construction will start in the next couple of months and be finished by 2015. It will provide public care for patients in that region free of charge. There has been some suggestion floating around that because it is run by the private sector that private fees would be attached to that hospital. That is clearly not the case. This is a public hospital where treatment to all members of the public will be free of charge, and on that site will be provided the full range of services we would expect at a public hospital.

I want to talk a little about the history of Swan District Hospital and the timing for the new Midland health campus. As members know, the government has said it will open in 2015, and we have copped a little bit of criticism from the opposition about the timing. I was talking to a media person who had formerly been involved with *The West Australian* who has a clear recollection of 2005 when the Minister for Health of the time announced the new Midland hospital. I have a press release about the new Midland hospital, with the member for Midland, the Minister for Health at the time, announcing a \$192 million hospital. Members will recall that this hospital is costing \$360 million to provide 307 beds. The then Minister for Health was going to provide a \$192 million 326-bed hospital—more beds for half the money! But not only that. Construction was to start in 2008 and finish in 2010. The member for Swan Hills knows it did not start in 2008. In fact, the minister came along in 2007, just about a year out from the start of the hospital, and announced a delay to 2012, so the completion of the new hospital was moved back for a year. When we came to government at the end of 2008, there was \$190 million in the budget, which was half the amount we needed to build that hospital. We saw not a single sign of the dollars that would be required to build a hospital that size—not a design, not a single drawing and not one piece of paper; it was a “gonna”! I well recall the sign going up in 2005: new hospital to be built by the Labor Party! We saw exactly the same thing with the construction time frame and the sequence of dollars for the Fiona Stanley Hospital. It started at about \$700 million and it was going to be ready in 2010; then each year we went forward there was a different amount of money allocated and the build went out by another year.

This government has copped flak about the problems we have in our public hospitals with lack of beds; and we do have problems because the growth in demand has been extremely difficult to manage with the number of beds we have. We needed the Fiona Stanley Hospital to have been built when it was promised—in 2010. If we had got those additional beds in 2010 when they were promised, we would not have the pressure on beds, the ramping, a waitlist for surgery or any of those things that we have in 2012. We would not have those pressures if members opposite had got on with the construction that they promised when they were in government. I am sure members will remember that just as we came up to the election in 2005, the minister announced the commencement of the new Fiona Stanley Hospital.

**Mr J.M. Francis:** Eight times.

**Dr K.D. HAMES:** It was eight times in total. Just before the election, they got a dozer out there to clear some trees and that was the start.

**Mr J.M. Francis** interjected.

**Dr K.D. HAMES:** They had beautiful big signs. No plans, no designs—nothing; just signs. That is what the former government was about. They had that ad to show us the very things done by the Labor Party and then there was silence. That is what it is all about. Absolutely nothing was done. This government has gone on and commenced the project. I am sure that the member for Kalgoorlie will be interested to hear this. This is a media release from 2007 when the Department of Health—read “Labor Party”—said that an overheated construction market was to blame for the delay in capital works on the new Midland health campus. An overheated construction market is exactly the same excuse they used for putting off development of the Kalgoorlie Hospital, which was desperately needed and which this government has gone ahead and done. The same sort of promises were made about Albany Regional Hospital and never delivered. This government gets on, builds hospitals, gets things done and delivers them on time and on budget.