

MIDLAND HEALTH CAMPUS

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

Today the minister turned the first sod at the future Midland public health campus and I was proud to have attended the event as well. Could the minister please update the house on this project and outline the special welcome he received this morning?

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

I thank the member. His presence was appreciated, as was that of the member for Midland. In fact, the federal minister Tanya Plibersek also joined us there. The project is jointly funded with \$180 million of state government funding and \$180 million of federal government money for a fantastic new hospital to be built. There will be 307 public beds and an additional 60 private beds, so there will be 367 beds. We saw some footage showing what the hospital will look like and I am sure that the member for Swan Hills will agree the way it was presented was absolutely excellent.

We did have a special welcome when we arrived. It was good to be welcomed in that way, because we had the United Voice members there with a little protest. We were told that there would be a big protest group and it was a very warm welcome from all 22 members present. I counted twice to make sure I did not make a mistake! One of those was Carolyn Smith, who managed to get herself arrested for obstructing my vehicle. Luckily she was only given a warning, which I think was fair enough. Dave Kelly was there, of course—the shadow Minister for Health’s best mate! The member for Bassendean’s best mate!

**Mr M.P. Whitely:** Absolutely! I think he will be a good member of Parliament!

**Dr K.D. HAMES:** He was there, but, interestingly enough, he was not there at the front! I had this row of people barricading the vehicle while it was trying to get in; Carolyn was there right at the front, and there was Dave Kelly off to the side! He was not looking at the car; I was looking and ready to give him a wave, being the friendly guy that I am, but he would not even look! He would not turn around! He was doing the charge, but he wanted to stay out of the limelight, did Dave—stay on the side!

But what I said to the audience is that I was actually quite happy with the protest, because I think it shows they love our government, and love me in particular! It is true! It is true!

**Mr B.J. Grylls:** It was the united voice of support!

**Dr K.D. HAMES:** Which other unions were represented at that function? St John of God Health Care has entered into a contract with Multiplex to build that fantastic \$340 million construction, which will provide heaps of employment. There will be something like 1 000 staff employed there, many of whom will be union members. Does Brookfield Multiplex have union members working for it? I think it might. I do not know if they are happy or not, but they were not protesting against the government building this hospital with St John of God; they were clearly quite happy to do that. Of course, St John of God was there, as were some of its wonderful nurses; St John of God nurses have been providing health care in this state since the start of settlement. St John of God nurses provide a magnificent service to the public. I was very happy to see they were there. I would think St John of God has union members working for them at those private hospitals, and I am sure some members of United Voice work for them, but they were not protesting and saying, “No, don’t give it to St John; you have to keep it in public hands”; they were not anywhere to be seen. The only ones who did not want us to do the contract with the private sector were the United Voice members who work for the public sector, so they obviously love us! They love the government of this state and they want to keep working for us; they do not want to have to work for the private sector.

**Mr A.P. O’Gorman** interjected.

**Dr K.D. HAMES:** Well, we are laughing on this side, and some members opposite might just laugh on the inside. But they have to laugh on the inside because they will be watching and writing down who laughs and who does not! But I have say that we find it amusing, because the reality is, why would a union care whether its members work for the public or private sector? Why should it make a difference to them? It is because they have more capacity —

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Thank you, members!

**Dr K.D. HAMES:** Part of the reason is that they have all their members on their side who they are out working to support, so they want to put the negative view just to support the Labor Party and for no other reason. Remember, every other former Labor state in this country has contracted out to the private sector for the provision of hospital services, exactly the same as we are—every other state! In fact, we copied our public—

private partnership program from the Victorian Labor Party's PPP website! In fact, we can read the former Leader of the Opposition's words on public-private partnerships, endorsing the concept of contracting to the private sector. So the only reason they object is, firstly, because they are big supporters of the Labor Party, and, secondly, because they think they can manipulate government better than they can manipulate the private sector.