

BUNBURY HEALTH TASK FORCE, REPORT

1838. Mr Masters to the Minister for Health

In reference to the Final report of the Bunbury Health Task Force, dated April 2002, I ask -

- (a) which of the six members of the Task Force have had professional medical/health experience specifically within the Busselton area (as opposed to the Bunbury area);
- (b) why was the Task Force final report not presented to the Minister until April 2002, in spite of the Minister's request that it be presented by 31 December 2001;
- (c) recognising that the final report deals with an issue within the Busselton area, why were newspaper advertisements restricted to the two that circulated mainly in the Bunbury area;
- (d) who were the key stakeholders to whom letters outlining the Terms of Reference and inviting written submissions were sent; in particular, who were the stakeholders from the Busselton area that were contacted for this purpose;
- (e) why was I as the Member for Vasse not requested to present a submission to the Task Force (or otherwise formally advised of the existence of the Task Force), recognising that the final report makes recommendations that directly affect my electorate;
- (f) who were the senior officers at the Busselton District Hospital with whom the Task Force met;
- (g) when was the Busselton meeting referred to on page 4 held, who attended and why was I not given the opportunity to attend;
- (h) who was the executive officer from the Department of Health who facilitated the work of the Task Force and what was the cost to Western Australian taxpayers of the time and other costs attributable to the allocation/secondment of this person to the Task Force;
- (i) how many submissions were received;
- (j) from whom were these submissions received;
- (k) have members of the Health Service Boards, including the Vasse Leeuwin Board, yet received letters confirming their sacking;
- (l) who is Mr Jeff Travers and what role did he play in the deliberations and activities of the Task Force;
- (m) with whom did Mr Michael Moody and Mr Jeff Travers have 'extensive meetings' following the announcement on 23 November 2001, of the structure of the State Health Management Team;
- (n) what meetings with key stakeholders and other interested parties did the Task Force chairman, Mr Tony Dean MLA, hold in the period leading up to the production of the Final Report;
- (o) with which South West Local Government Authority elected officials and Chief Executive Officers were meetings and discussions held and which members of the Task Force were present at each of these meetings;
- (p) as referred to on page 8, what significant increase in the funding allocation to the Bunbury Health Service was made and when;
- (q) as referred to on page 9, what was the specific nature of the 'certain criticism' that had been levelled at the Bunbury Health Service and the Department of Health and, without naming the individuals concerned, what were the affiliations and/or credentials of the people or groups who levelled this criticism;
- (r) is the second paragraph on page 9 suggesting that 'the most current and projected population, demographic and epidemiological data' were not available or used by the decision-making authorities at the time that the planning of the South West Health campus was undertaken;
- (s) when does the Minister expect the Director General of Health to establish and implement a framework to enable south west community input into whole of system health policy decision making;
- (t) what will be the issues upon which communities will be able to provide input as part of this community input process and what issues will they not be able to provide input;

- (u) what are the detailed data to back up the statement that 'the Task Force has identified ...a significant flow of patients to Perth from Bunbury and other hospitals located within the South West';
- (v) what are the data to back up the statement that 'the Task Force also identified a need for improved coordination in the discharge of patients from the Bunbury Health Campus into the Bunbury community and discharge and repatriation to other South West Hospitals and communities';
- (w) what are the recent advancements made in the field of telemedicine and broadband technology that provide the potential referred to in the final report and how will these potentials be fully explored;
- (x) what actions will be taken to reverse the downward trends in the number of patients in triage categories 2 through 5 inclusive who are to be seen within the ACEM recommended times, as shown by the reducing percentages of patients meeting the ACEM recommendations and by the increasing average waiting times as shown in the two tables on page 16;
- (y) why was I not invited to attend the inspection of Busselton District Hospital Emergency Department in February 2002;
- (z) is the Minister aware that, contrary to the claim that the Busselton Shire is one of the fastest growing shires in Australia, in fact it has been the fastest growing Local Government instrumentality in Australia for several of the past five or six years;
- (aa) is the Minister aware of claims made by many people who work within or have dealings with the Busselton District Hospital that it is not just the Emergency Department that is no longer suitable for its current purpose but the entire hospital and nearby Kevin Cullen Community Health Centre;
- (bb) when will a decision be made on the recommendation that capital funding should be urgently provided for the upgrading of the Emergency Department at the Busselton District Hospital;
- (cc) will the assessment of funding urgency for the Emergency Department also include an assessment of the Hospital's 'overall requirement for capital improvement or indeed the eventual replacement of the facility', as suggested in the report and previously been brought to the Minister's attention by myself;
- (dd) how did the existence of the five South West Health Service Boards hinder or otherwise adversely affect staff mobility across health service facilities in the south west, as is implied on page 20; and
- (ee) does the presence of brackets around the acronym BRH in the third line of page 25 indicate that the siting of the South West Rehabilitation Service is not yet decided and may not be located at the Bunbury Regional Hospital?

Mr KUCERA replied:

- (a) The Task Force membership included a medical practitioner with 50 years experience and a registered nurse with 15 years experience in the South West.
- (b) My office advised the Task Force Chairman that it was acceptable to me for the Report to be submitted after 31 December 2001. An inspection of the Busselton District Hospital could not be scheduled until 8 February 2002.
- (c) The South Western Times is distributed throughout the South West, and was considered by the Task Force to be an appropriate means of advertising its Terms of Reference.
- (d) Letters or e-mails were sent to the Australian Medical Association, Hospital Salaried Officers Association, Australian Nursing Federation, South West Health Executive, Health Department of WA, Chief Executive Officer St John of God Hospital Bunbury, and a number of visiting specialist and general medical practitioners.
- (e) The Member for Vasse was not requested to present a submission to the Task Force, or otherwise formally advised of the existence of the Task Force, because the Task Force Terms of Reference were advertised in the press.

- (f) Mr Noel Carlin, General Manager Vasse Leeuwin Health Service; Ms Wendy MacDonald, Health Service Manager Busselton District Hospital; Ms Tricia Nolan, Clinical Nurse Manager Busselton District Hospital; Ms Liz Ford Emergency Department Nurse Manager Busselton District Hospital; Dr John Ward Busselton District Hospital Emergency Department; Dr Jon Mulligan, Director of Medical Services Bunbury Health Service; and Dr Gary Wilkes, Director of Emergency Medicine Bunbury Health Service
- (g) 8 February 2002. Mr Noel Carlin, General Manager Vasse Leeuwin Health Service; Ms Wendy MacDonald, Health Service Manager Busselton District Hospital; Ms Tricia Nolan, Clinical Nurse Manager Busselton District Hospital; Dr Jon Mulligan, Director of Medical Services Bunbury Health Service; Dr Gary Wilkes, Director of Emergency Medicine Bunbury Health Service, Mr Tony Dean MLA, Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich MLC and Mr Jeff Travers (Task Force Executive Officer).
- (h) Mr Jeff Travers, Manager Human Resources Warren Blackwood Health Service was seconded to provide Executive support to the Task Force. The total cost of the Bunbury Taskforce is \$84,932.70.
- (i) 23 submissions were received.
- (j) Organisations and individuals from whom submissions were received were advised that all submissions would remain confidential.
- (k) No Board members were sacked, and no letters to this effect were issued.
- (l) Mr Jeff Travers was the Manager Human Resources, Warren Blackwood Health Service and was seconded to provide Executive support to the Task Force. Mr Travers organised meetings for the Task Force and at the direction of the Task Force gathered information for the Task Force.
- (m) South West Health Service Boards, Councils, and Management Committee members, Health Service General Managers, and Health Service employees.
- (n) Mr Dean did not meet personally with any key stakeholders leading up to the production of the final report.
- (o) Mr Moodie and Mr Travers addressed a meeting of the South West Ward of the Country Shire Councils Association on Friday 30 November 2001. This Association represents the Bunbury City Council and the Shires of Bridgetown-Greenbushes, Busselton, Collie, Capel, Dardanup, Donnybrook-Balingup, Augusta-Margaret River, Harvey, Manjimup, Nannup, and Boyup Brook. The meeting was attended by Shire Presidents and Chief Executive Officers. Task Force members did not attend this meeting.
- (p) The budget allocation for Bunbury Health Service in 1996/97 was \$22 407 900, increasing to \$35 308 100 in 2000/2001.
- (q) Criticism covered issues such as the physical layout being energy inefficient; separation of theatre, recovery, and wards contributed to increased rostering costs; transfer of patients from theatre to wards in view of the public did not respect the dignity of patients. Criticism came from internal and external users of the facility.
- (r) No.
- (s) A process of community consultation and engagement is currently underway within the South West.
- (t) Processes are currently in place to determine these issues.
- (u) Information provided to the Task Force by officers of the Health Department was sourced from the Hospital Morbidity Data System.
- (v) The Task Force relied upon information provided from community members and medical practitioners.
- (w) Advancements have been made in the areas of telepsychiatry and medical imaging. Broadband technology provides potential to expand the application of telemedicine to areas such as emergency medicine that may benefit the geographically dispersed communities of the South West and the health professionals serving those communities.

- (x) The South West Area Health Service has reconfigured the staffing profile of the Emergency Department at Bunbury Regional Hospital.
- (y) The inspection of the Busselton District Hospital by the Task Force was arranged by the General Manager of the Vasse Leeuwin Health Service. No other local politicians were present at this inspection.
- (z) Yes.
- (aa) The Task Force identified that any consideration of capital funding for the upgrading of the Busselton District Hospital emergency department should be undertaken in the context of capital funding requirements for this facility. Services planning within the South West will determine service delivery requirements at Busselton in conjunction with an assessment of the capabilities, in a service delivery context, of the existing facilities.
- (bb) At the completion of appropriate assessment and planning processes.
- (cc) Yes.
- (dd) The Task Force Report stated that the decision to amalgamate the five Boards and the establishment of the South West Health Board provided a positive contribution in the area of staff mobility. The South West Health Board is a single employing whereas previously there existed 5 employing authorities. The imputation placed by the Member on the Task Force's statement is misguided.
- (ee) No