

MIDLAND HEALTH CAMPUS — CONSTRUCTION

375. Mr F.A. ALBAN to the Minister for Health:

I was concerned to see television advertisements relating to the new Midland health campus and the future of the staff currently with Swan District Hospital. I note that the advertisements also suggested that there were delays in the construction of the campus. I ask the minister to advise the house about the authenticity of these claims.

Dr K.D. HAMES replied:

That is an excellent question from the local member. I was a bit surprised when I watched that ad on television the other day, and since then I have got copies of the advertisement that the federal member for Hasluck put out on the hospital. In fact, one reminds me of the former state Minister for Health, because there is a sign up there saying “New Midland health campus being constructed 2012.” As we know, the former minister was extremely good at putting up signs about hospitals being constructed. I remember that the Fiona Stanley Hospital sign was there for a long time with not a shovel of dirt being turned. Here is the picture —

Mrs M.H. Roberts: Guess what? The sign is still there! It was there last week.

Dr K.D. HAMES: Yes, but what is behind it? The member for Midland can see construction—there are buildings going up! I advise the member for Midland that today the government released information about the second stage of construction, and \$1.63 billion has been allocated to complete the second stage. This government is getting on and doing it, on time and on budget.

I then received a letter, which has gone to all the residents in the Hasluck electorate. The member for Hasluck is obviously desperate to retain that seat. She is so desperate, in fact, that she peddles total mistruths about the hospital to the people of her electorate. Let us go through what she has put in her advertisement. First, the hospital will be constructed in 2016. That is wrong! I have stated over and again that it is due for completion in 2015. Second, the Liberals do not care about people’s health needs and they will not guarantee the jobs of health workers at Swan District Hospital. I have said publicly, at least twice, that the government will guarantee the jobs of the staff at that hospital and that those people would either go to the new hospital and work at the new hospital or, if they wanted to stay in the public sector, be retained in that job. I have said that publicly on at least two occasions. So, that is another lie—lie number two! Third, the hospital was going to be completed in 2013. That was not a lie; in fact, it was going to be completed in 2012. What did we find out about Midland hospital when we came into office? Absolutely nothing had been done!

Mrs M.H. Roberts interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Midland!

Dr K.D. HAMES: And when we go —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Midland, I formally call you for the first time, along with the member for Girrawheen.

Dr K.D. HAMES: Let us go back to what happened in the budget in the lead-up to our forming government in 2008. We found that there had been two deferrals of the Midland hospital. After the former government made these promises in its early days, in 2000, construction was deferred by six months in the 2007–08 budget and then deferred —

Mrs M.H. Roberts: The federal government provided \$160 million.

Dr K.D. HAMES: Mr Speaker, it is very difficult when there is this constant nattering from my right.

Several members interjected.

Dr K.D. HAMES: The construction of the Midland hospital was deferred by a further six months in the 2008–09 budget. How much had the former government allocated in its budget to the construction of the hospital? It had allocated about half the cost of the hospital. The former government said it was going to be built in 2012, but it had not allocated the money required to build the thing! When we got into government in late 2008, we found that there was not enough money and no plans; there was not a single design drawing related to the construction of that hospital. There was absolutely nothing! There was no way on this earth that the former government would have been able to complete the hospital at any time.

Mrs M.H. Roberts: You were the one who was going to complete the hospital. You have \$160 million of federal money and you are still two years behind time. You are an embarrassment!

The SPEAKER: I direct the minister and the member for Midland in this case. Minister, stick with the questions that you have been asked. Member for Midland, if you want to avoid being called formally again, I suggest to you, respectfully, that you might listen to some of the answer; you might then want to ask some questions instead of consistently interjecting.

Dr K.D. HAMES: Excellent idea. There was not enough money to build the hospital, no designs were done and no plans were done. This government went to the federal government seeking assistance and it put up half of the money, which allowed us to get on with the job of building the hospital. That is what we are doing; we are getting up, we will build the hospital, and we will have it done by 2015. To the member who puts out loads of rubbish like these press releases I am holding—mistruths, mistruths and more mistruths!