

MIDLAND HEALTH CAMPUS — COMMONWEALTH FUNDING

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

The Midland health campus provides a significant service to my constituents in Swan Hills and more broadly to the eastern region of Perth.

Several members interjected.

Mr F.A. ALBAN: This will make members opposite happy. Last night, I welcomed the federal government coming to the party on the Liberal-National government election commitment to the Midland health campus with its \$180 million contribution to the project. Will the minister outline how the Liberal-National government will finally deliver the much-needed improvements to the Midland health campus that were promised repeatedly, but never delivered in past years?

Dr K.D. HAMES replied:

It was a very interesting night last night. I thank the member for Swan Hills for his question; he is obviously a very strong supporter of the Midland health campus.

It was funny last night. I was walking around with a big cheesy smile that I could not wipe off my face no matter what I did. However, as I was walking around outside this house, all I could see were frowns. I could see people from the other side of the house with their heads down, mumbling into their chests saying, “Why did they give them the money? Why did they give it to them?” Were any of them saying that they were happy that Western Australia had done very well? No; they were saying, “Why did they give them the money?” To me it felt a little bit like Christmas. The only trouble was that the Premier and I were the only people sitting around the Christmas tree getting the presents and we were wondering what everybody else would do. This government got everything that it asked for. The government put a strong case for its highest priorities to the federal government.

Mr E.S. Ripper interjected.

Dr K.D. HAMES: We are very happy to get the money back. After all, it is our money. It is not as though it is the federal government’s money. More money goes out of this state than comes back in, and the Leader of the Opposition knows that. We are getting this state’s money back. We were extremely pleased because we got everything we asked for. The Department of Health asked for funding for four particular projects.

Mrs C.A. Martin: I wasn’t moping.

Dr K.D. HAMES: The member for Kimberley was definitely not moping, even though the funding we wanted from the federal government for the Broome District Hospital did not involve a large amount of money. It amounted to \$7.9 million. When the Broome hospital was redeveloped—well done to the former minister for doing that—the paediatric unit was left out. The unit occupied an old building that was left in the middle of a totally redeveloped hospital. The federal government has come to the party with \$7.9 million for that unit.

We also wanted funding for the Kimberley renal dialysis service. Currently, large numbers of Aboriginal people are travelling to Perth, far from their homes and families, for dialysis. The Kimberly Health Service put forward a program to expand the renal dialysis service into the regions. This state already has part of that funding through the Ord redevelopment program. Money for that project has been allocated in the state budget and the federal government has approved \$8.6 million in capital funding. It is a very important program for Aboriginal people.

What made this government the happiest was funding for two significant programs. The federal government has provided \$180.1 million for the Midland health campus. I have already relayed to members my discussion with the former Minister for Health after we won government. In effect, he apologised that the current Leader of the Opposition had not, as Treasurer, given him enough money for the Midland health campus. In fact, the former government was \$100 million short in its funding for the redevelopment of the Midland health campus. This government put that program to the federal government as a funding priority and it has delivered \$180 million. It is enough money for this government to get on with the job and do the full relocation as one item. The previous Minister for Health planned for a staged redevelopment, but there was not enough money for the first stage let alone both stages. Now the money is available for the full redevelopment.

We can take some credit for the current location of the Midland health campus. The former minister was planning for the redevelopment of the old hospital when we released our health program, which included our preference for the Midland health campus to be located on a new site, and that is where it is going. The previous minister’s program was due out at the time we released our program and suddenly the then government’s program was delayed by six weeks. Lo and behold, when the minister’s program was released the Midland health campus was to be located on a new site. I thought it was a great initiative.

The final priority of this government was the money for the Shenton Park campus. The federal government has given this state \$255.17 million, which is the total amount of money that, without state contribution, is required. Both the Midland health campus and Fiona Stanley Hospital are located on state-owned land. The Shenton Park hospital, as members know if they have been there, is in a very sad state. The building is dilapidated and the services are run down. For a long time an upgrade has been required, but has not been done. The staff at that hospital will be extremely happy with this program because they have been lobbying for change for a long time. Their conditions of work, conditions of employment and facilities are extremely poor. The federal government funding will allow this government to get on straightaway with the job of moving that whole hospital complex across to Fiona Stanley Hospital, which is where Reid said it should be. The residents and the doctors are very happy.

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: Will you be voting Labor at the next federal election?

Dr K.D. HAMES: There are two points to that: Firstly, it is our money that is coming back; and, secondly, it is not only our land but also the Liberal Party's proposal. However, if Rudd comes over I might give him a cuddle.