

Re: Petition No 041

Further to the petition requesting the Legislative Council recommend to the Western Australian Parliament and the Department of Health to urgently reconsider their decision to demolish the hospital and to negotiate a change in the tender to retain the current Warren District Hospital.

This petition was supported by the signatories from the Manjimup community because it is seen as a wanton waste of public money to spend public money on demolishing a substantial state owned building when that money could be used to adapt the existing facility and provide health services that are lacking in the local area.

On behalf of petitioners I request the urgent attention to this matter by the WA Legislative Council because the new Warren Health Service facility is nearing completion and it is our understanding that the demolition will take place immediately following commissioning of the new building. This matter has not been taken to the Ombudsman but taken directly to the Legislative Council because urgent action is needed.

The existing Warren District Hospital building could be used for many things including providing allied health services complementary to the new hospital. It could also be used as office space, student accommodation, crisis care accommodation – many suggestions have been received from the community which are sensible and reflect the needs in this community and in the greater south west area.

Manjimup is a regional centre and the current hospital buildings could become a hub for ancillary health services providing services for the wider south west community. The health service sector is the second largest employer in Australia and developing health services in the area would provide much needed long-term employment opportunities for local people of all ages.

Whilst the WA Health Department considered the existing hospital too expensive to upgrade in order to provide for current high care hospital facilities it appears that the WA Health Department did not consider any other use for these state owned buildings.

The current hospital is a large building with a full commercial kitchen, ensuite rooms and large spacious meeting places. The building could be separated into different areas and different wings used for different purposes.

Petitioners suggestions for use of the current hospital building include:

A sub-acute restorative unit where people stay for 6 weeks and take part in a programme post surgery for physio etc before returning home. Programmes such as this could provide meaningful employment for some of the less able unemployed people in the way of assisting patients by being able to take them for walks etc.

Respite and palliative care, crisis care, respite care for elderly or people with disabilities and their families, rooms and areas for training facilities, allied health facilities, drug and alcohol rehabilitation and mental health rehabilitation.

The Manjimup community is unaware, and would like to be made aware, whether the following factors were considered during the decision making period:

- Was an independent building survey of the current hospital building undertaken with a view to assessing the value of keeping the facility and using it for purposes other than a high grade hospital?
- Why was the decision made, without consultation, that the hospital would be demolished to make way for a car park?
- What consideration was given, if any, to using the current hospital for health services other than as the main hospital?
- Why was the demolition of the current hospital tied to the building of the new hospital?
- Has the site of the current hospital been earmarked for future development by a private developer?
- The current hospital is a large facility which if demolished will generate a huge amount of industrial waste; industrial waste is a problem in this state as elsewhere. Was this taken into consideration?

The only group to benefit from the demolition of the current hospital facility is the company undertaking the demolition work.

The community of Manjimup would like to see these substantial buildings retained and used in its present state or brought up to 'fit for purpose' for any of the suggested uses.

The total demolition of this facility would be an absolute waste of a public resource.

Yours sincerely,

Mary Nixon,

January 31st, 2018.