

PEEL HEALTH CAMPUS — PAEDIATRIC WARD

**473. Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN to the Minister for Health:**

I refer to the \$3.4 million dedicated paediatric ward at Peel Health Campus that was opened by the minister with much fanfare in June.

- (1) Can the minister confirm that children are being turned away from this ward and that it is yet to be used as a functioning paediatric ward?
- (2) Will the minister explain why this ward is not functioning properly and what the minister is doing to fix the problem?

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

I thank the member for the question.

- (1)–(2) I am well aware of the issues. Despite the member's obvious implied criticism of the people running it, it has nothing to do with them. The ward was constructed with significant funds that were raised by the community, together with a large state government contribution and, I think, some commonwealth government funding, although that was nowhere near as big as the state government's contribution. The fundraising was largely run by Arthur Marshall, who is the champion for raising money for that hospital. I have been advised that the hospital has not been handed over to the Department of Health. The safety and structure of any construction in the building is required to be ticked off on. They are the usual things to do with a building contract that are required to be ticked off by the Department of Planning, and that has not occurred yet. We have not had the handover. I gather that that is imminent and will be concluded within weeks, if not days.

It is just not true that patients are being transferred to other hospitals. I know that a lady is implying that it is true but it is not true. The reason that it is not true is that a ward for children already exists within the hospital, as the member knows, and there are no limits on the capacity of that ward. Anyone who is suitable for admission to a children's ward at that hospital is being admitted. On occasions there are cases when it is not suitable to manage someone at that sort of hospital and the patient needs to go to a tertiary hospital. In the particular case that was raised in the media, the patient was transferred to Fremantle Hospital.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** You must be embarrassed about it when it is not operational.

**Dr K.D. HAMES:** Not at all. In fact, I have been at the opening of Rockingham General Hospital with the member for Rockingham, where exactly the same problem has occurred. I do not hear the member for Rockingham jumping up and down making a criticism, because he would know, as should the member for Mandurah, that until a hospital has been handed over to the Department of Health, it is not safe for patients to be there. The firewalls at Peel Health Campus, for example, were inadequate. In fact, the firewalls in the original building were inadequate. Those firewalls had to be built. Until the hospital is handed over and all the tick-offs have been done to ensure that the builders' work is adequate, it is not possible for us to put children there. That is not a restriction on the ability of that hospital to receive children, treat them and admit them.