

HOSPITAL RELOCATION PLANS

247. Mr P.D. OMODEI to the Minister for Health:

I refer to the Labor Party's proposal to relocate Princess Margaret Hospital for Children to the Royal Perth Hospital north block following the closure of Royal Perth Hospital, and to the Liberal Party's proposal to retain Royal Perth Hospital and construct a new Princess Margaret Hospital for Children and King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women on the Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital site.

- (1) Is it true that the Labor Party is now seriously considering the Liberal Party option?
- (2) Given that it has now been estimated that a total of only 1 200 beds can be located on the Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital site, so that under this scenario the size of the adult tertiary hospital cannot be expanded, will the minister now abandon his proposal to close Royal Perth Hospital, which would seriously disadvantage the eastern corridor patients?

Mr J.A. McGINTY replied:

- (1)-(2) Unfortunately, the way in which health care planning has taken place in this state over the decades has been one of adhocery and political opportunism. I have had the opportunity to say in this place in the past that the promise from the Liberal Party at the last election to build a 50-bed hospital in Pinjarra, when it had shut one down five years earlier, highlights the stupidity of that approach. It was a marginal seat. Albany is a marginal set. The Liberal Party went to Albany and promised to bulldoze a perfectly good hospital! The people there laughed at them! The Liberal Party's National Party opponents in that election laughed at them and said it was a stupid proposition. It is time with health care planning that we got above the Liberal Party approach of saying: we will promise a hospital if there is some political advantage to be gained from it.

The Labor Party approach is to consider the needs of the public. For example, where will we build our hospitals so that people can receive treatment closer to home? We are not concerned about marginal seats, which is what the Liberal Party is particularly concerned about. We have had a vigorous process in this state to determine needs. We need a major tertiary hospital south of the river - the proposed Fiona Stanley hospital - and the Liberal Party is half-hearted about that. I wonder what the member for Murdoch has to say about that. I am sure he is not supportive of the Liberal Party views on that issue. We will build a brilliant new hospital in Midland, which is long overdue. Rockingham will have, effectively, a brand-new hospital - an upgrading from the current 80-beds. It is the sort of thing that people cannot dream of when the Liberal Party is in power. We will stick to the plan and not be sidetracked every time there is a by-election or a bit of political opportunism. I have undertaken with clinicians from Princess Margaret Hospital for Children and the Australian Medical Association to look at the last piece of the jigsaw; that is, where should PMH be appropriately located to make sure that for the decades ahead it is in place.

I have one last point; that is, the Liberal Party will never be in a position to be able to influence, in any direction, the future of our hospital system, because come the next election it will be set in concrete and it will be irreversible. We will have a system that we will stick to. The political opportunists on the other side can whistle into the wind, because the new hospital system will be in place and it will be a great Labor model.