

QUESTION

FIONA STANLEY HOSPITAL — *MELVILLE TIMES* ARTICLE

HANSARD 20 MAY 2010

Dr M.D. NAHAN to the Minister for Health: I note with concern the headline on the front page of the *Melville Times* of 18 May, which reads, "Plug pulled on beds — Fiona Stanley Hospital". Can the minister please advise the house whether this is an accurate statement?

Dr K.D. HAMES replied: I wonder where the member for Alfred Cove is, who played such a strong part in this. She should obviously be here. The story is not actually a bad story because, although it presents the allegation about this occurring, it provides my response, which shows quite clearly that the bed allocations for the south metropolitan area are incorrect.

The belief was that, because we decided as a government to retain Royal Perth Hospital as a tertiary hospital, 200 beds are to be pulled out of Fiona Stanley Hospital. I have already addressed the issue of Royal Perth Hospital, so I will not go into that again, but I will go into the number of beds were to go into Fiona Stanley and the number that will be there now.

Under stage 1 of the former government's plan, the number of beds was to be in the order of what is currently planned—that is, 643. In the long term, about five years after stage 1 had been completed, the number was going to increase to 1 016. Under the current plan it will increase to 838, approximately 200 beds less in that tertiary component of Fiona Stanley Hospital.

Where are those beds now going and are they going to Royal Perth Hospital? Definitely not.

The key recommendation of the Reid review was that we should get away from concentrating all our efforts on tertiary beds, where the cost of managing patients is much more expensive, and concentrate them on the peripheries—to hospitals with the secondary beds.

Where are those 200 beds going? One hundred and fifty of them are going to Fremantle Hospital, where they will be secondary beds. When we compare the number of beds under the 2005 clinical service framework with the number of beds under the 2010 framework, we can see that there will be an additional 150 beds at Fremantle Hospital.

The member for Rockingham will be pleased to know that the difference in the number of beds under our plan compared with his government's plan is an extra 50 beds at Rockingham Hospital. Far from going to a tertiary hospital in the northern suburbs, those 200 beds will go to secondary hospitals in the southern suburbs.

The total number of beds will remain the same under the former plan, but they will be in secondary hospitals where they are much cheaper to maintain. Articles like this are fine, but a headline like "Plug pulled on beds ..." is a pretty ordinary headline and does little credit to the people who run the paper.