

CARNARVON REGIONAL HOSPITAL - BIRTHING WING

1080. Hon KEN BASTON to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Health:

I refer to the Carnarvon Regional Hospital.

- (1) Will the birthing wing be closed over the Christmas period?
- (2) Is it intended to permanently close the birthing wing and integrate it with the main nursing ward in 2007?
- (3) If so -
 - (a) what are the reasons for the proposed closure and integration of the birthing wing into the main ward; and
 - (b) what community consultation has been invited or undertaken regarding this proposal?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I thank the honourable member for notice of the question.

- (1) For a number of years maternity services at Carnarvon Regional Hospital have been integrated into the general ward over the Christmas period. This is done to maximise staffing efficiency and effectiveness over a period of generally low activity. Last year, approximately 120 to 130 babies were born at Carnarvon hospital, and there is the ability to conduct caesarean sections. There is no cessation of services and access to the delivery suite and operating theatre remains available at all times.
- (2) With the redevelopment of the Carnarvon hospital due to go to tender in January 2007, the maternity beds will be integrated with the general inpatient beds in a "one nursing unit" model for acute inpatient care, which is in line with contemporary design standards. The delivery suite will be part of the redevelopment and the operating theatre will remain in use. There is no impediment to the integration of the areas occurring sooner than the redevelopment being completed. The changes will be implemented as soon as is practicable, and in consultation with all the medical nursing and non-clinical staff.
- (3)
 - (a) The integration of the maternity and general areas will ensure that there is more efficient and effective use of the staff and the facility. Currently, the physical location of the maternity unit is very inefficient because it is located quite remotely from the general ward. The "one nursing unit" model for acute inpatient care, as referred to in answer to question (2), is in line with contemporary design standards. There will be no closure of services.
 - (b) The change has been discussed with the medical, nursing, midwifery and other clinical and non-clinical staff of the hospital as well as key stakeholders, including the shire council and the Gascoyne Development Commission throughout the planning processes over recent years.