

ROEBOURNE DISTRICT HOSPITAL - CLOSURE

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

I refer to the letter dated 29 March 2006 from the Shire of Roebourne to the Minister for Health regarding the future of the Roebourne District Hospital, and the accompanying petition carrying 500 signatures asking the Department of Health to reveal its intentions.

- (1) Is the minister aware that the closure of the Wickham District Hospital was justified on the basis of retaining the Roebourne District Hospital?
- (2) Is the minister aware that if the Roebourne District Hospital is closed, patients will have to drive 40 kilometres to Karratha for hospitalisation and the families of those patients, many of them indigenous, will have to make a round trip of 80 kilometres to visit them?
- (3) What was the monthly bed occupancy rate at the 10-bed Roebourne District Hospital for the period January 2005 to the time of response to this question?
- (4) Will the minister give an undertaking that the Roebourne District Hospital will not be closed?
- (5) If the answer to (4) is no, why not; and how does the minister justify the breach of the commitment given when the Wickham District Hospital was closed?

Hon KATE DOUST replied:

I answer on behalf of the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Health and I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1) Wickham District Hospital has not been closed but provides a range of ambulatory care, primary health and community health services, including an emergency response with a capacity for daytime care and observation.
- (2) No firm commitments regarding the closure of Roebourne District Hospital have been made at this time. Consultation with community members and service providers and other stakeholders will form part of the development of a health strategy for the west Pilbara, including Roebourne. Discussions are expected to commence in May 2006 and be completed by the end of June 2006. A transport solution for the Roebourne community will be an integral part of any endorsed new model of health care.
- (3) Roebourne District Hospital has 16 beds. The average monthly bed occupancy rate has been four a month. Two of the four have been long-term clients awaiting nursing home vacancies. Without the aged care occupancy, the bed average would be two a month.
- (4) A consultation process will be occurring with the Roebourne community as part of a development of a health strategy for the west Pilbara. No decisions to close Roebourne District Hospital have been made at this time.
- (5) No decisions to close Roebourne District Hospital have been made at this time. Consultation with the Roebourne community will occur as part of the development of the health strategy for the west Pilbara.