

FIONA STANLEY HOSPITAL - PUBLIC CONSULTATION WORKSHOPS

520. Hon KEN BASTON to the minister representing the Minister for Health:

I refer to the minister's media statement on 5 June titled "What does Australia's best hospital need?" An announcement was made in that press release about the establishment of four metropolitan public consultation workshops regarding the Fiona Stanley Hospital. Given that 25 per cent of Western Australia's population lives outside of metropolitan Perth -

- (1) Why was there no mention in the press release of public workshops to be held outside of metropolitan Perth?
- (2) Is it the minister's opinion that the taxation contributions of regional Western Australians do not warrant them having a say in the shape of the new hospital?
- (3) Will public consultation workshops be held outside of metropolitan Perth; and, if not, why not; and, if so -
 - (a) how many are planned;
 - (b) where will they be held;
 - (c) on what dates will they be held; and
 - (d) what form will they take?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of this question.

- (1) No mention was made in the media release of feedback opportunities for people in regional Western Australia because the statement was intended for the metropolitan media only. The government has always been keen to consult with people in regional areas about the new hospital, and the mechanisms for consultation are being designed to provide them with effective opportunities to provide some input. Releases alerting people in the regions of their opportunities to provide feedback on the Fiona Stanley Hospital will specifically target people in the regions and will not be written for the metropolitan media.
- (2) No.
- (3) The option of holding a series of public workshops in a number of regional centres has been explored. Ultimately, it has been decided that there are better ways to engage people in regional and rural communities than holding a limited number of workshops in a limited number of locations. The other methods include: an online survey, which is expected to be online either later this week or early next week, to be made available to everyone in regional and remote Western Australia who has access to the Internet; a survey to be made available in hard copy and distributed on request to people without Internet access; a dedicated email feedback facility; a dedicated 1800 free-call phone facility that will be staffed 24 hours a day for seven days a week; advertisements to be placed in regional media to alert people to these opportunities; editorials in regional media; feedback through health networks, including the WA Country Health Service, general practitioner networks and staff networks etc; and feedback through the network of the Health Consumers' Council of Western Australia. Furthermore, the project team received advice from operators of the teleconferencing facilities in a number of regions to the effect that workshops may not be the best way to reach the largest numbers of the general community in regional and remote Western Australia. Disappointingly, there has been a very limited response to the well-publicised workshops in the north metropolitan area, and a much stronger response in the southern suburbs closer to where the hospital is to be constructed. The Minister for Health encourages and welcomes comments and feedback from all Western Australians, including those in regional and remote Western Australia during the planning and development phases of the new Fiona Stanley Hospital.