

Dear Matthew Swinburne,

I am writing this letter to you responding to the petition number 119 – Quadriplegic centre closure. The previous Liberal government promised to rebuild the centre, they understood that it was well past its use by date being built back in 1969. Plans were drawn up and as I understand, \$30 million was put aside for the upgrade. I would like to know what the current Labour government has done with these funds if they are not going to rebuild the centre.

Shane Yenschc, the executive director for Alinea (formally known as the Paraplegic Quadriplegic Association) has also voiced his concerns about the closure. Without a new centre this model of care is reliant on the ability of patients to complete their rehab and then move back into the community within a short time frame of approximately 3 to 6 months; which is unfeasible.

I know first hand how hard it is when you first have a spinal-cord injury (especially people suffering with quadriplegia) it takes considerable amount of time to get all your affairs organised, NDIS funding, house renovations, and public housing. In some cases it has taking well over 12 months to integrate back into the community without a new centre.

I believe there will be a bed lock situation happening at Fiona Stanley Hospital. I know the Labour government has announced they will build 12 new dwellings by mid 2020 in the metropolitan area but as a fast growing W.A. population we need more.

Some people are quite concerned about the level of safety in the community especially the methamphetamine epidemic which increases the risk of being a victim of violent crime such as:

- Home invasions
- Random attacks on vulnerable people

The Quadriplegic community are very concerned about this. The centre provided us with safety

The centre not only helps quadriplegics to get back into the community, respite and long-term rehabilitation after surgery, it also stimulates economic growth through employment and specialised training in high-level spinal-cord injury. Most carers who have worked and got educated at the Quadriplegic Centre are now with private providers.

The Labour government said it is keeping with the international paradigm shift towards community based service delivery for people with a disability, while moving away from the medical mode.

I know of a centre that is under construction in Queensland by Spinal Life Australia which is a flagship healthy living centre offering short-term accessible accommodation with allied health services, a rehabilitation gym, community cafe and more. This project is made possible with the funding from the Australian government. *More information can be found at <https://www.spinal.com.au/cairns>.*

Like Queensland, Western Australia is a massive state and a centre like this in Perth would be so beneficial for the spinal-cord injury population of Western Australia.

Western Australian providers; Elba only provide in-house respite which does not help regional people. Brightwater care group only provides respite for people with aged care support. The Multiple Sclerosis Association of Western Australia provides respite but it is limited to 5 rooms in a shared group setting and is very strict on living conditions which does not provide ongoing rehabilitation. Rocky Bay also only provides one accessible unit. Akira does provide respite but again does not provide rehab.

Please find attached email responses I have received from the services.

I know Spinal-cord Injuries Australia are currently building accommodation in Floreat, but this is only one house and does not provide long-term support for rehabilitation after surgery or accommodation for spinal-cord injury sufferers who have just come out of hospital and are looking to integrate back into the community.

The West Australian Health department since 2018 has slowly mothballed the Quadriplegic Centre. Making physiotherapists redundant and also the community nurses. They provided a wonderful service and would also visit people with spinal cord injuries in their houses in both metropolitan and rural areas which the the Spinal Out Reach Service does not provide.

As for the information provided for how many people were using the quadriplegic Centre in 2016, it was noted the centre was used on 40 occasions equalling 387 days and in 2017 24 occasions equalling 159 days.(see attached e-mail from Lynda Emerson director of nursing at the Quadriplegic Centre) These are the number of occasions that the two self-contained duplexes were used not the actual centre its self.

If people break the law and reoffend there are facilities to accommodate them and give them food shelter and rehabilitation. If people have an addiction and relapse there are centres in Western Australia for rehabilitation, but if someone breaks their neck which need on going rehabilitation there is no such facility if the Quadriplegic Centre closes down. I thought the Labour government was all for sticking up for the little guy and the vulnerable but it looks like they want to wipe their hands from the disability sector and are only concentrating on lowering the West Australian deficit.

With the new NDIS system people in remote regional areas now do not have access to occupational therapists for assessment locally. A lot more quadriplegics will have to come up to Perth for assessments and equipment. This will result in more accommodation needs. I am asking the Labour government to reconsider all the information and rethink about building a new centre.

Thank you for your time

Yours sincerely Glenn Neville