

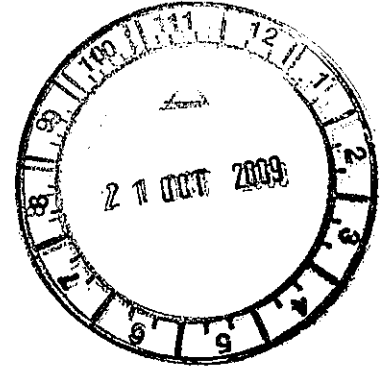


PUBLIC

**Deputy Premier of Western Australia
Minister for Health; Indigenous Affairs**

Our Ref: 25-08204

Hon Brian Ellis MLC
Chairman
Standing Committee on Environmental and Public Affairs
Parliament House
PERTH WA 6000



Dear Mr Ellis

Thank you for your letter of 16 September 2009, providing me with a copy of the petition and submission from Mr Gary Norden and the Busselton Hospital Community Action Group. My comments in response to the issues raised are set out below.

The reasons for the delay in the construction of the new hospital and the anticipated completion date

The delay to the commencement of construction has resulted from the Government's decision to review all Capital Works processes and reassign the order of priority.

Whether a new hospital will be built or the old hospital refurbished

As a result of the innovative model of public and private health care that is being proposed a wide range of services and construction options are being considered. These include combinations of new build and major refurbishment. As negotiations with the potential private partners have not been finalised it is not possible at the moment to say how much of the redevelopment will be newly built and how much will be significantly refurbished.

The adaptive re-use of some of the existing buildings is consistent with the overall master plan for the campus and will significantly reduce the environmental impact of the project without adversely affecting the quality of the facility. It will also optimise use of the allocated budget.

The reason for the change in the proposed location of the new hospital

After considering all options for the future of the Busselton Hospital a decision was made by Government to redevelop the existing site. This decision was made for a range of reasons as outlined below:

- The Australian Electoral Commission conducted a Referendum of Busselton Shire resident on the issue of site selection on the 28 June 2007. The referendum results were:
 - 60 per cent of eligible voters took part in the Referendum;
 - 70 per cent (7798) voted to retain the current hospital site; and
 - 30 per cent (3342) voted for the Vasse Newtown site.
- The original site selection report identified that the existing site performed well in relation to social aspects, accessibility and infrastructure when compared to the eight other sites that were considered.
- The redeveloped hospital will have a high profile on Bussell Highway.
- Ownership of the land gives the State greater leverage to negotiate with the private sector in order to attract additional services and capital to the site, thereby expanding the range of public and private health service options to the Busselton community.

Whether an environmental assessment has (or will be conducted)

A number of environmental assessments have been conducted and reported on in relation to the Busselton Hospital site.

The Public Health Intelligence Directorate has investigated the incidence of cancer amongst staff of the Busselton Hospital site and the results indicate that there is no evidence to suggest a cancer cluster exists.

Preliminary soil testing on the site has been completed and no major issues related to the soil have been identified. Further soil testing will be conducted once a final master footprint is known.

Coffey Environments has provided the report titled Significant Fauna and Flora Values – Busselton Hospital Redevelopment Site. Once the master footprint is confirmed Coffey Environments will identify the environmental impact and any proposed environmental mitigations. Coffey's work will form the basis of referrals to the State Department of Environment and Conservation and the Commonwealth Department of Environment, Water, Heritage, and the Arts.

PUBLIC

The environmental concerns raised in the submission, include the possible threat to the Western Ringtail Possum population

The Busselton Hospital site is core habitat for the Western Ringtail Possum. As noted above the adaptive re-use of the existing buildings is consistent with the overall master plan for the campus and may significantly reduce the environmental footprint of the project.

It is anticipated that the redevelopment of the Busselton Health Campus will ensure long term onsite environmental management to conserve and improve the habitat of the Western Ringtail Possum.

Whether the impact of the delay in construction of a new hospital on the provision of health services in the area has been assessed, and whether any steps will be taken to ameliorate those impacts

The existing hospital has sufficient capacity to continue to meet the needs of the community until the redevelopment is completed. The Emergency Department was given a minor upgrade in December 2008 and it is not expected that there will be any further need for major capital works.

Thank you for providing me with this opportunity to respond to the petition. I trust that my comments have clarified the matters raised.

Yours sincerely



Dr Kim Hames MLA
DEPUTY PREMIER
MINISTER FOR HEALTH

16 OCT 2009

PUBLIC