

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

THURSDAY 11TH FEBRUARY 2016

REPATRIATION GENERAL HOSPITAL

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (12:31): Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, and I rise to support the motion of our leader:

That this house—

(a) notes that more than 119,000 people have signed petitions opposing the closure of the Repatriation General Hospital, more than 88,000 of which have been tabled in the house; and

(b) urges the government to heed the call of the petitioners and the veterans on the steps by reversing its decision to close the Repat.

I do really want to pay tribute to Augustinus Krikke and his mates who stuck it out on the steps. They defied all means of getting rid of them. They set up camp, and businesses along North Terrace and elsewhere looked after them. They offered them food. I know that a lot people walking past offered them food and support.

I can recall going to a breakfast one morning and hearing a story about the great success of Golden North and its ice-cream, so I brought back some Giant Twins for the boys. It might have been a bit early at 9 o'clock but I think they enjoyed them very much anyway.

These people show what it is really like to have loved their country and served their country and what they wanted to do for their fellow men and women who have served this state and this great nation; and also for their support for the many regular citizens who use the services of the Repat.

It is disappointing when going to a briefing to hear from the current health minister, minister Snelling, that one of his reasons for wanting to shift the Repat into central Adelaide is to get it closer to veterans. Well, I can assure the minister that not all the veterans live in Northern Adelaide or Edinburgh. Just because we have a battalion stationed there now, veterans come from not just all over Adelaide—it may come as a surprise to the Labor Party—but all over South Australia.

Wherever they have come from they have given great service for this state and this nation, and far too many have paid the ultimate sacrifice and we have far too many suffering PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder). They have paid a huge price and we owe these people a significant debt. You could not put in monetary terms the losses that many of these people have faced, not only with their mental injuries or their physical injuries but what a lot of these people have lost in regard to losing whole families and partners because of the service they endured and the things that happened. A lot of us could barely imagine the situations that these people have been placed in.

My brother served for 23 years. He did a couple of tours. He served in Rwanda, which was upgraded to full military service (it was United Nations service) and he also served in Iraq. He appears to be alright; you never know when things could change, but he certainly appears fine.

Notwithstanding that, the Daw Park Repatriation Hospital has been and is a real icon of excellence for the veterans and civilians that use the premises, gifted to the state by the commonwealth, and in no way, shape or form has the commonwealth ever wished for that land to be on-sold. We note that former premier Rann and former health minister the Hon. John Hill both said it will never ever happen. It is a bit like our current Premier saying there will never ever be a rise in the GST. It seems to be a common thread with the Labor Party in this state: 'never ever' becomes very much a lie when things get turned around. The people in this state need to realise that: when they hear 'never ever' from the Labor Party, never to believe it, because this looks like it is going to happen.

It is a great tragedy for this state, and people need to look far further forward than just their complete mismanagement of the state's finances for the past 14 years. If the state's finances had not been so mismanaged for the past 14 years, they would not have to be making such ridiculous decisions as selling the Repatriation Hospital at Daw Park. There were years in the early 2000s before I came in here and even from when I was here in 2006 when there were hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars of unbudgeted GST money that flowed from Canberra into this state—unbudgeted—all blown up, all gone, all Labor's folly, just gone with the wind.

Here we see, just like the forests, the MAC, the lotteries—I just make the point that especially the lotteries and the forests were money-making ventures, yet we see the Labor Party in this state sell ventures that actually make money, because they think there is a risk because they have no idea how to manage businesses—

The Hon. T.R. Kenyon interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Newland—

Mr PEDERICK: Chuck him out, ma'am.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: —will make a contribution rather than interject. It can be your turn next, if you wish.

Mr PEDERICK: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, for your protection.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I throw myself in front of danger where you're concerned, member for Hammond.

Mr PEDERICK: Thank you, ma'am, and I always do respect your strong support when I am on my feet, because sometimes I do need that valuable protection, and I appreciate you taking the bullet. What I will say is that the Labor Party are so afraid of running profit-making businesses that actually were putting money into the coffers of this state. The forests, for instance, were \$43 million on average, although I have heard the Canadian superannuation firms turned that

into \$75 million annually, so you can understand how perhaps private operators can turn a far bigger profit.

The Hon. T.R. Kenyon interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Newland is called to order.

Mr PEDERICK: We hear some distant bleating from the other side trying to defend their case, but it is an absolute disgrace. The lotteries—

The Hon. T.R. Kenyon interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Newland is warned for the first time.

Mr PEDERICK: Chuck him out, ma'am. The Labor government just keeps selling off items, one by one, until there will be nothing left. In fact, the former member for Port Adelaide, the former treasurer Kevin Foley, actually tried to sell a building and he did not own the land under it.

Members interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr PEDERICK: Someone had to inform him that it was not his to sell. This is a real tragedy for this state, and I think the government really need to have a good look at themselves. As I said, many people have used the services at Daw Park. I have used them in the past and I have found the staff extremely good to work with. They are extremely well-caring people, throughout the nurses and doctors and all the staff there.

In fact, I had a very interesting conversation about EPAS, the electronic patient record system, and the fact that well over \$100 million—and probably heading to \$200 million-plus by now—has been wasted on this electronic system which is going into the botched new Royal Adelaide Hospital which I note does not have the room to have paper files and shows how much of a debacle is happening in the so-called Transforming Health policy in the state.

We have a hospital where the opening is being put off by months and months, and I will be surprised if that hospital even opens this year. There are already a great number of faults being picked up from what I am told out there in the real world by people who work in these situations, whereby some people who get diagnosed by a doctor and who happen to be on their bed in their room will not be able to get through the door back into the hospital because it is not wide enough for a bed. They will have to be put back onto a barouche and trolleyed through. When a figure of up to \$2.3 billion to \$2.4 billion and rising has gone into the hospital, which I must say is an overspend that would have built the Adelaide Oval all over again, it is disgraceful.

With the mismanagement of this project, we also see water pipes leaking and water flowing right throughout the building, so what hope do we have for health in this state when we have facilities closed? And some of these facilities out at Daw Park have not been opened for many years at all—but oh no, we will just trash them and run the bulldozer through them and be done with it, and forget

about the veterans and the good citizens of this state who have used the Daw Park Repatriation Hospital for many years. As for the local member, the member for Waite, I did not hear one cogent argument from him this morning about anything to do with the hospital. In fact, he was just trying to give us his version of history which I do not believe many people would agree with.