



HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

THURSDAY 28th SEPTEMBER 2017

NOARLUNGA HOSPITAL

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (11:26): I rise to support this motion by the member for Mitchell in support of the critical health services at Noarlunga Hospital, acknowledging the vital services those staff provide and the contributions they make at Noarlunga, expressing the fear they have of what is happening with Transforming Health but also acknowledging the cuts Labor has made in bringing the funding for Noarlunga Hospital from \$31 million down to around \$12 million. This goes on and on with health in this state.

We have seen the third most expensive build in the world with the \$2.4 billion new Royal Adelaide Hospital, and what do we see when it opens? Sheer chaos—not enough instruments, not enough sterilisation. The RAH-bots are not roaring up and down the corridors, nor are they running into each other. They have their own little corridors behind the walls to deliver the food. We know that the hospital was not ready for the move. It needed to be delayed so that procedures could be put in place so that the hospital could function appropriately.

We also know that, even after the state Labor Party and the Premier proudly announced that they would not be closing down any health facilities in this state, they have presided over the closure of the Repatriation General Hospital in Daw Park and this is outrageous. We saw Vietnam veterans and other veterans campaigning on the steps of this place—

An honourable member: They are still campaigning.

Mr PEDERICK: —yes, they are still campaigning—for many hundreds of days. For well over 100 days they camped out the front of this place, and good on them for making a point, these servicemen who served our state and our country—to think that the federal government were in charge of the Repat hospital and essentially gifted it to the state and now it has been thrown away as if it is something we do not want.

The most bizarre thing in the conversation around the Repat hospital is the fact that I have been told that it was the former health minister's idea to centralise services more in South Australia, but what he really meant was that he was centralising services in Adelaide. Essentially, for all those veterans who live outside Adelaide the Repat hospital was exactly fine where it was. There was no reason to shift it. There were many excellent wards and services in place at the Repatriation General Hospital. I was a patient there myself and there was excellent service by the staff there. Again, we see Labor come over the top and decide, 'Oh, no, we don't like that. We'll just close it off as part of our Transforming Health program and kill it off.'

How well has Transforming Health gone? It has gone nowhere. It is an absolute disgrace that with three years of work in the most budget-heavy portfolio in this state—which takes at least 30 to 35 per cent of the funding of the whole state budget—on a political whim a decision was made within 24

hours without even consulting health professionals to trash Transforming Health or at least that section of it. We do not know whether other bits of Transforming Health will go on and, really, what can you believe will go on?

We have seen the excellent work of the Hon. Stephen Wade in the other place. He saw two ministers off—great work. That was because of the chaos inside health, the chaos in moving to the new Royal Adelaide Hospital and the chaos in mental health and older persons facilities, like Oakden. We have seen political opportunism in regard to the dumping of Transforming Health, which was chaotic. It would essentially see patients, who were perhaps suffering from a stroke, taken by paramedics somewhere on a weekday, only to find when they rolled down the chart on the back door of the ambulance that the specialist was somewhere else. It was a disaster waiting to happen. The only good thing about dumping the Transforming Health plan is that it has been dumped.

What we have seen, and obviously with some internal polling and focus groups within the Labor Party, is that this was all trash. It was Trashing Health. So all of a sudden they have panicked: 'We have to put these services back. We have to put them back in the Lyell McEwin. We have to put them back in The Queen Elizabeth Hospital. We have to make sure we have the front-line services we need in the new Royal Adelaide Hospital.' And look at the politics out at Modbury with the Deputy Speaker: she has seen off Jack Snelling, the member for Playford. It is interesting how Modbury has played out and how the politics has played out in that area. We have seen a big scalp go in regard to Modbury Hospital.

We on this side of the house support Modbury Hospital. We support all the hospitals throughout South Australia. It is just outrageous that you have a government that flips and flops on health policy, as we see here with Noarlunga, where they just cut funding from \$31 million to \$12 million for the good people of the southern suburbs. Others who are in that area may be caught up in an accident. Anyone could be caught up and need to attend that hospital. Sadly, as we have heard from speakers today, those services have been cut. They have been decimated as part of this government's program in regard to Transforming Health.

The problem we have, as indicated yesterday when we were talking about country health issues in this place, is that a lot of health people love to speak up. A lot of those front-line nurses and practitioners would love to have a lot more information come out and would love to give us more information, but they are absolutely threatened with their jobs. What sort of society do we live in where people cannot speak freely? We on this side of the house are about free speech. We are about the right to stand up for your rights. But if you work in the health system, if you say anything out of place, you are gone. You are out of it. You will be sacked if you bring up anything that is going on.

Look at the chaos that is EPAS, the electronic recording system that is being rolled out in health in South Australia. What a disaster that is. It is heading towards costing the same amount of money that it cost to build Adelaide Oval. I find that confronting. It is heading to over half a billion dollars. After spending all this bad money, I reckon I would be pulling the pin, but I am told that there is so much bad money being spent that we will just keep funding dollars into this program that just is not working.

It has not worked at the Repat, it has not worked at Port Augusta, and guess what? In the new Royal Adelaide Hospital—the third most expensive build in the world—it is not in place. The floors of the new Royal Adelaide Hospital were not built strong enough to carry paper records. Well, what are we going to do? Punch all the records into our iPhones as we walk between wards and beds in the hospital? It is outrageous!

I have been informed that the targeting of the proposed date for the EPAS rollout in the Royal Adelaide Hospital is March next year—funny about that. It might happen just before the election, but do not hold your breath. In the meantime, there are some bunkers or containers

somewhere. We will employ a heap of couriers, I guess, and they will be running between these bunkers or these containers bringing the records to and fro from the third most expensive building in the world, which is just not operating efficiently because they do not even have the record-keeping system in a way that will work.

This is the disaster that is happening in health in this state and it is affecting hospitals right across this state. What faith can country hospitals have? What faith can they have in a system when you have a Labor government that just flips and flops. They take no notice of the country anyway, and we know that. The Premier has made that point himself. He said, 'Well, there's no votes in it, so who cares?' He said the same thing when they knocked back \$25 million for the diversification fund for the River Murray, so why would they care about the \$150 million backlog in maintenance upgrades in country health? Why would they care? It is outrageous.

As a local member, when you have an official visit with a health minister, they go through all these protocols so that everything is nice for you to see, but when you live in a community you visit these hospitals because either your child has had an accident or you need some health care and you just go there anyway and see what is going on.

The motion of the member for Mitchell has my full support. All he wants, and all we on this side of the house want, is appropriate health care for the people of the south and the people who are traveling through the south and need emergency health care at Noarlunga Hospital. We are here also to support the good staff at that hospital who are frustrated at the chaos they are involved in and also frustrated that they cannot speak out because they are in fear for their jobs.