

Question Time 02.07.2009

Hammill House

Mr BROCK (Frome) (14:30): My question is to the Minister for Health about the Hammill House upgrade, which was announced in the budget. This may be a Dorothy Dixier, but I want this on the record to ensure that it will go forward. I ask this question, as I would like an answer from the minister, and I hope that I get one.

An honourable member interjecting:

Mr BROCK: Excuse me, member.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BROCK: The Hammill House facility is for aged and acute care, and it adjoins the Port Pirie Regional Health Service. Stages 1 and 2 were completed some years ago, but we have been waiting for some years for the completion of the project. What work will be carried out in stages 3 and 4, which were announced in the budget?

Members interjecting:

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Kurna—Minister for Health, Minister for the Southern Suburbs, Minister Assisting the Premier in the Arts) (14:31): I thank the member for Frome for his question, and I am amazed that members on the other side are attacking him for asking this important question. The government has a longstanding commitment to Hammill House. Stages 1 and 2—

Ms Chapman interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I note that the deputy leader is interjecting. I really hope she gets to ask me a question today. I look forward to being able to answer her questions in parliament today, but I have to say that, if she keeps—

Ms Chapman interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Stages 1 and 2 of the redevelopment—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order, the member for Schubert and the member for Kavel!

The Hon. J.D. HILL: This is a very important question for the member for Frome, and I acknowledge his great interest in Hammill House and the hospital, where I think he was on the board for a while. Stages 1 and 2 of the redevelopment included a \$500,000 upgrade of the building for the Day Care Centre and Industrial Therapy, which was completed in December 2006. The redevelopment of the Dementia Wing, which cost \$1.5 million, was completed in March 2007.

As the member said, in the most recent state budget the state government allocated a further \$2.78 million to stages 3 and 4 of the Hammill House upgrade. This work is due to commence late this year, and it is expected to be completed by the end of 2010.

Stage 3 includes conversion of the existing multibed wards on the north side of the building to provide 13 beds in single and double rooms with en suites and an associated upgrade of air conditioning infrastructure. Stage 4 includes the conversion of existing wards on the eastern side of the building to provide eight beds in single and double rooms with en suites and an associated upgrade of air conditioning infrastructure and the provision of patient and visitor lounge areas.

The member for Frome has strongly advocated for the refurbishment of this facility for his community, both before and since he entered the House of Assembly, and I acknowledge that and thank him for it. As members would be aware, the commonwealth government sets uniform standards for these facilities and allocates bed licences to aged care providers.

The commonwealth has advised us that, following completion of the capital works, the commonwealth government (within its required 60 day window) will favourably assess the suitability of the premises to be granted beds licences. Commonwealth approval will then be sought to activate 30 commonwealth licences previously transferred from the Department for Families and Communities to Hammill House at a cost of \$0.7 million.

Once activated, commonwealth licences will result in ongoing recurrent funding from the commonwealth of between \$1.8 million and \$2 million per year. So, this is a good arrangement for both the community and the state government.

Mr BROCK (Frome) (14:34): I have a supplementary question. When the works are tendered out, will local businesses in the region be given the opportunity to tender for them?

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Kurna—Minister for Health, Minister for the Southern Suburbs, Minister Assisting the Premier in the Arts) (14:34): That is a good question. Of course, we are bound by Treasury rules around tender processes but, subject to those tender processes, of course local businesses will be able to tender.