

**JOONDALUP HEALTH CAMPUS — STROKE SUPPORT UNIT**

*Grievance*

**MS E. HAMILTON (Joondalup)** [9.49 am]: My grievance today is to the Minister for Health. It relates to Joondalup Health Campus and the need for a stroke support unit to be open and accessible for people who live in the rapidly growing northern corridor. This is also a relevant issue for my colleagues in this place whose electorates are in the northern suburbs.

We know that the risk of stroke is prevalent in all communities and there is a need to act quickly when a stroke occurs. We know also that stroke is one of the biggest killers in Australia and that the long-lasting effects and potential disability following a stroke can be significant. Therefore, we need to ensure that a patient who lives in the northern suburbs and has a stroke is able to access the same services, care and ongoing support that is afforded to patients who live elsewhere. When I was knocking on doors and making phone calls during the election campaign, I found that this was a significant issue for local residents in Joondalup. Since I have been elected, this conversation has continued, and the electorate is asking when a stroke support service will be available at Joondalup Health Campus.

The Stroke Foundation's 2014 figures show that 7 100 people in the Joondalup–Wanneroo area were living with the effects of a stroke and that 750 new strokes had occurred. Many of us have a family member, relative or close friend, or know a parent at the local school, who has experienced the devastating effects of stroke.

It is true that this government has committed to an upgrade of Joondalup Health Campus. This is a large and significant project, and it will take time not only to begin its construction but also for it to be completed and operational. However, the process is well underway with the signing of a statement of intent between the state government and Ramsay Health Care in late June, which was just a few months ago. Do not get me wrong—this is a much-needed commitment and one that has been extremely well received. It forms part of the government's health policy, which focuses on patients' needs and ensuring that people receive the health care that they need close to where they live. It makes sense that patients are able to receive the care that they need locally. This enables not only easier access to treatment and services but also continuation of support from family and friends while receiving care close to home.

Stroke units are located at Royal Perth Hospital, Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital, Fremantle Hospital and St John of God Midland Public Hospital. Those hospitals are located some way from the northern suburbs. Stroke affects people in different ways and the needs of each person will be different. What does not change is the need for and the benefit of ongoing support services for people patients who have had a stroke. Distance and accessibility should not be a barrier to enabling patients to access the care that they need on an ongoing basis.

The Northern Suburbs Stroke Support Group has worked tirelessly over the years. I have heard from many people who have experienced a stroke, and have met with families who are supporting people through this life-changing experience. The stroke support group has advocated in an unwavering manner to ensure that the needs of stroke patients in the northern suburbs are met. The membership base of that group is truly reflective of our community. The stories are harrowing and the adversities that people who have experienced a stroke have to overcome are difficult to imagine. From time to time, the life-changing and often permanent disabilities start to take their toll. The provision of support services can make a huge difference in the lives and the recovery of individuals who have lived this experience.

Stroke patients who live in the northern corridor often have to make daily trips south of Joondalup to access the support and dedicated and specialised care that they need. The majority of these people go to Fiona Stanley Hospital. This means time away from their family and additional travelling costs. For some people, these difficulties mean that they are unable to access the recommended amount of support service that they require. This is happening now to members of my community. I want to mention Rob, a young husband aged in his 30s with two children under four years of age. Another fellow I want to mention is Shane Cole. I was talking recently with his wife, Lara. She told me that for the therapy that Shane needed after suffering a stroke, they had to travel to Fiona Stanley Hospital. This was a 44-kilometre trip each way and took 50 minutes in a car if there was little traffic. Last week, Shane had a meeting at Fiona Stanley Hospital at 9.30 in the morning. They had to leave home at 7.45 in the morning to make sure they could get there in time during peak traffic. Lara told me it is not easy to get a person who is disabled out of bed and showered, dressed and fed to go to an appointment that is far away.

I ask the minister whether there is some way in which a stroke unit could be established at Joondalup Health Campus and be open and accessible to support the needs of people in the northern corridor without the need to wait for completion of the upgrade and expansion of Joondalup Health Campus.

**MR R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Minister for Health)** [9.54 am]: I thank the member for Joondalup for bringing this issue to the chamber today. I must say that the member for Joondalup has been relentless on this issue, not only during the short time she has been in this Parliament and providing great representation for the people of

Joondalup but also prior to that as a member of the community. It is no surprise, given the statistics that the member has presented, that one of the Labor Party's key election commitments was to expand the range of health services available to people in the Joondalup area and establish a six-bed stroke unit as part of the expansion of Joondalup Health Campus. The election commitment includes expansion of the emergency department, additional hospital and mental health beds, operating theatres, a medihotel and an urgent care clinic. The Department of Health has commenced the process of implementing that election commitment. As the member for Joondalup noted, we have recently signed a statement of intent with the operator of Joondalup Health Campus so that we can get on with the task of redeveloping that hospital as a matter of priority. A project team has been established within the North Metropolitan Health Service, and planning for the Joondalup hospital redevelopment has commenced. I am very pleased about the progress that has been made so far. A business case is being developed to obtain government approval of the detailed project scope, time frames and funding for the redevelopment. It will also identify project risks and include a plan for benefits realisation.

As the member pointed out, that will not be of great assistance to people like Bob and Shane and other people in the community who have suffered a stroke and who need to realise the benefits of a stroke unit as soon as possible. I am pleased to say that we will commence with an acute comprehensive stroke service at Joondalup hospital in the 2017–18 financial year. Funding of \$5 million in 2017–18 has been allocated through the service agreement with the North Metropolitan Health Service and the operator of Joondalup Health Campus for additional inpatient activity and not-admitted clinical activity in the new stroke unit. Commencement of the stroke unit is not dependent on the redevelopment of Joondalup Health Campus. That is the important message that I want to give today.

This government is getting on with the job of delivering this service to the people of Joondalup and surrounding areas ahead of the redevelopment of the hospital. The six beds in the new stroke unit that we identified during the election campaign can be accommodated within the existing infrastructure of the hospital. Obviously once the redevelopment of the hospital has been completed, there will be a dedicated area for the stroke unit. However, this interim arrangement will enable these services to be implemented immediately. I am pleased to announce that Dr Andrew Wesseldine, the state stroke director, has been appointed part time to Joondalup Health Campus to assist with the development of an appropriate stroke model of care. Joondalup Health Campus is currently actively recruiting a stroke physician to lead the unit. It will take some time to fully establish the service. However, the implementation and commissioning of the unit can commence in advance of the redevelopment.

The message today to the member for Joondalup and her constituents is that we are getting on with this important election commitment immediately. We are not waiting until the redevelopment of the hospital has been completed. We want to bring these important services to bear as soon as possible. The statistics that the member cited make sobering reading, with over 7 000 people in the Joondalup area requiring ongoing assistance for the impact of stroke and 700 people in one year having had a stroke episode. We know that there is a need for stroke services in this area, and we are responding to that.

I also thank Jonine Collins, the WA executive officer of the National Stroke Foundation, who we have been working with to keep this election commitment and make sure we are delivering on the service we said we would provide to the Joondalup community. Most importantly, I once again praise the advocacy of the member for Joondalup. She has done a great job and has been unrelenting since getting elected in pestering my office and me about making sure we get on with this important election commitment, and I am very pleased to announce that we will be doing so.