



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEES

**BUDGET ESTIMATES
2024-2025
Supplementary questions**

Portfolio Committee No. 2 – Health

Health and Regional Health

Supplementary Hearing: Monday 2
December 2024

**Answers due by: 5.00 pm Monday
6 January 2025**

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BUDGET ESTIMATES 2024-2025
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS

Questions from Dr Amanda Cohn MLC

Policy compliance

- (1) What is the process for Ministry of Health to ensure that senior management and managerial staff within Local Health Districts comply with:
 - (a) Ministry of Health policies
 - (b) Legal obligations under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (NSW)
 - (c) SafeWork NSW Code of Practice: Managing Psychosocial Hazards at Work?

- (2) What accountability and enforcement frameworks are in place to address instances of noncompliance by senior management with these policies and laws, specifically in:
 - (a) Investigating and addressing workplace psychosocial hazards
 - (b) Protecting the health and wellbeing of staff?

RESPONSE:

I am advised:

The Ministry of Health requires that all hospitals are audited using a statewide work health and safety audit tool to determine compliance with safety legislation and NSW Health policy.

The requirements for the audit program, reporting arrangements and the audit tool are set out in NSW Health policy PD2023_010 Work Health and Safety Audits, which is on the NSW Health website (www1.health.nsw.gov.au/pds/Pages/doc.aspx?dn=PD2023_010).

AWH operational funding

- (3) How much operational funding was provided to Albury Wodonga Health in:
- (a) 2023-2024
 - (b) 2022-2023
 - (c) 2021-2022
 - (d) 2020-2021
 - (e) 2019-2020

RESPONSE:

I am advised:

Albury Wodonga Health operates as a cross-border Victorian public health service managed under Victorian legislation, through an Intergovernmental Agreement between NSW and Victoria.

Annual Albury Wodonga Health operational funding is outlined in the Statement of Priorities, as required under the *Health Services Act 1988 (Vic)* between Victoria and all Victorian health services. This document is published annually on the Victorian Department of Health website (www.health.vic.gov.au/statements-of-priorities/albury-wodonga-health-statement-of-priorities).

For further information, please refer to the Albury Wodonga Health annual report on the Albury Wodonga Health website (www.awh.org.au/about-us/reports-and-publications).

Questions from Hon Chris Rath MLC on behalf of the Opposition

Bathurst Health Service Redevelopment

- (4) Can you provide an update on the \$200 million redevelopment of Bathurst Health Service?
- (5) Please list all current members of the Bathurst Hospital Redevelopment Community Reference Group.
- (6) Please list all current members of the Bathurst Health Council, their tenure and when each individual's term will expire.
- (7) Is there a final design for this project yet?
- (8) Are tenders out for this project?
- (9) If tenders are out, what are construction companies tendering on if there is no final design?
- (10) The community has been promised another round of community consultation, when will this occur?
- (11) What is the purpose of another round of community consultation if tenders have already gone out?
- (12) Are you aware of the community's concern for a lack of carparking at the health service?
- (13) Will more carparking be included in the final design? If so, how many spaces will be added and where?
- (14) Please list options for more carparking that are or have been considered. If the option is not suitable, please list reasons why.
- (15) If cost is an issue, is extra funding being sought so carparking can be included?
- (16) Will the Minister ensure provisions in the \$200 million upgrade for more carparking, not less?
- (17) Will the Minister ensure that the community's concerns are heard on this matter?

RESPONSE:

I am advised:

The NSW Government has committed \$200 million towards the Bathurst Hospital Redevelopment, which will deliver enhanced access to a range of clinical services for patients, staff and the community.

In February 2023, a master plan for the redevelopment of the site was released for community and stakeholder consultation. In August 2023, the concept design was released for public consultation. In February 2024, the schematic design for the redevelopment was released for community consultation.

The main works tender was released in October 2024. Construction is expected to commence in 2025 following the appointment of a contractor and finalisation of the statutory approval process.

Increased car parking for the redevelopment is being planned to support the new main entry to the hospital on Mitre Street, the existing entry and emergency department. Traffic and parking design is being informed by a range of factors including demand, clinical and workforce planning, and staff and community consultation, alongside statutory planning requirements

Planning documents for the redevelopment are expected to be placed on public exhibition early in 2025 and will outline the scope of the redevelopment, including parking. Community information sessions will be held during the public exhibition period.

Personal details of the Bathurst Health Council and the Bathurst Hospital Redevelopment Community Reference members are not made publicly available without permission from the individual.

Panorama Clinic

- (18) As part of the \$200 million redevelopment of Bathurst Health Service, Western NSW Local Health District last week announced the local mental health service Panorama Clinic is to be moved to Orange for three years, does the Minister agree with this decision?
- (19) Why is the Panorama Clinic being relocated?
- (20) Who made the recommendation to relocate the Panorama Clinic? Please identify the role or committee that holds decision making responsibilities in this matter.
- (21) When did the CEO of WNSWLHD know of this decision?
- (22) When did the General Manager of WNSWLHD know of this decision?
- (23) When did the Board of WNSWLHD know of this decision?
- (24) When did the staff of WNSWLHD know of this decision?
- (25) When did the Bathurst Hospital Redevelopment Community Reference group know of this decision?
- (26) When did the Minister for Health know of this decision?
- (27) When did the general public know of this decision?
- (28) What was the reasoning for this decision?
- (29) What do you say to community members who are now without a vital mental health service?
- (30) How do you expect mentally ill individuals to make the journey to Orange to seek assistance?
- (31) What compensation or assistance will be given to staff who now have to travel as well?
- (32) How many staff are employed at the Panorama Clinic currently? Please list all positions.
- (33) Are there currently any vacancies? If so, how many?
- (34) Have all staff accepted the decision to relocate to Bloomfield precinct in Orange?
- (35) Are you concerned the Clinic will lose skilled staff over this decision?
- (36) Do you think it is appropriate that staff found out about the decision to relocate the Panorama Clinic at the same time as the general public and media?
- (37) Do you think this matter was handled very well generally? Was communication through the WNSWLHD, the Board and the community of an appropriate standard?
- (38) Please list all current WNSWLHD Board Members, their tenure and when each individual's term will expire.

- (39) Please list the postcodes of patients that have attended the Panorama Clinic in the last 12 months and how many from each postcode.
- (40) Were all avenues looked at before this decision was made?
- (41) What options were considered as an alternative location in Bathurst? Please list all options and why they were considered not suitable.
- (42) Please list the requirements of a mental health clinic like Panorama that would have needed to be considered if it was located to another site.
- (43) What about a temporary location?
- (44) What about reverting to pandemic operations?
- (45) If cost or viability is the issue, why wasn't extra funding provided to allow for this service to remain in a community that needs it?
- (46) Can you assure the Bathurst community that this service will be returned?

RESPONSE:

I'm advised:

- (18) After careful evaluation of a range of alternative options the WNSWLHD determined that the temporary relocation of Panorama Clinic to Wattle Grove unit in Orange was the most viable and affordable option available to the Local Health District.
- (19) The \$200 million redevelopment of Bathurst Health Service campus requires that buildings on the western (Panorama Clinic) and eastern (Community Mental Health and Chifley Clinic) parts of the campus to be demolished to unlock the site and enable the expansion of the current hospital. This will include its emergency department, the development of a new co-located inpatient and community mental health drug and alcohol hub on the campus. There is no other location on the campus that could temporarily be utilised for an inpatient Mental Health sub-acute unit. In addition, the temporary relocation of community mental services onsite during the redevelopment period is both possible and planned. A new mental health inpatient unit and community mental health and alcohol facilities will be built as part of the hospital's redevelopment.
- (20) The Redevelopment of the Bathurst Health Service has the standard authorising environment for all major capital projects undertaken by NSW Health. The Western NSW Local Health District Executive User Group (EUG) for the redevelopment project recommended that the simultaneous demolition and construction on the northern and eastern sides of the current hospital site. That recommendation required Panorama Clinic to be temporarily relocated. The Executive Steering Group (ESC) for the redevelopment project subsequently endorsed this recommendation.
- (21) The WNSWLHD Chief Executive is a standing member of the Executive Steering Committee for the redevelopment project which formally accepted the EUG's recommendation (as above) in during the design development phase in 2024.
- (22) The role of 'General Manager of WNSWLHD' does not exist within the WNSWLHD's leadership structure.
- (23) The WNSWLHD Board receives regular updates on all major capital projects. The WNSWLHD Board was informed that the redevelopment would require the temporary relocation of Panorama Clinic in early 2024. Where it was to be relocated was unknown at that stage.

- (24) Staff consultation regarding the need to decant the inpatient and community based Mental Health Drug and Alcohol services commenced in February 2024 and has been ongoing throughout the year.
- (25) The need to decant the inpatient and community based Mental Health Drug and Alcohol services was discussed with the Bathurst Hospital Redevelopment Community Reference group (CRG) in the initial planning discussions and on several occasions during 2024.
- (26) A briefing informing the Minister for Health of the need to temporarily relocate Panorama Clinic was provided in mid 2024.
- (27) Public commentary about the need to temporarily decant Panorama Clinic began in February 2024 and occurred on multiple occasions through local media articles and interviews.
- (28) Please refer to the response for question 19.
- (29) Community members will not be without a vital mental health service. There will be additional community based mental health services in Bathurst as part of a joint Commonwealth and State initiative as well as an expanded State funded mental health consultation liaison services available in Bathurst.
- (30) The WNSWLHD will provide patient transport to Orange when required. This is already the case for many involuntarily admitted patients who reside in Bathurst who receive their inpatient care in orange. Transport support will be extended to those consumers who use the voluntary inpatient unit, Panorama Clinic, while it is temporarily relocated in Orange.
- (31) The WNSWLHD has committed to proving transport for staff. Staff travel to the temporary site will count towards working hours to ensure they are not disadvantaged.
- (32) There are approximately 13.6 FTE positions at Panorama Clinic.
- (33) Current vacancies: Occupational Therapist 0.5 FTE
- (34) Staff will be asked to formally express their preference in coming months.
- (35) The loss of skilled staff is a concern in any circumstance. While some staff may choose to work elsewhere there is no specific concern related to the development of a purpose built inpatient and community mental health hub as part of the redevelopment of the Bathurst Health Service campus.
- (36) Staff were informed of the need to temporarily relocate the voluntary mental health inpatient unit many months ago and have had regular meetings with the district management team to discuss it. They were informed of the final decision regarding the temporary location of the Panorama Clinic via email several hours before it was advised to the general public via the media. Meetings with staff were also held on the day the final decision about the temporary location of the Panorama Clinic was announced.
- (37) The LHD has communicated through multiple avenues about the \$200 million redevelopment of the Bathurst Health Service and continues to do so. In relation to the announcement of the temporary location of the voluntary mental health inpatient unit, one media outlet breached an agreed embargo on the announcement which meant that some staff and community members were informed by a journalist ahead of receiving that specific information from the LHD. The WNSWLHD considers the breach of an agreed embargo on the release of that information by a specific journalist to be unethical, but the LHD is not responsible for the professional conduct of that individual.
- (38) WNSWLHD Board Members are listed on the District's website.
- (39) The table below lists postcodes of patients who have attended the Panorama Clinic in the last 12 months and how many from each postcode.

The data reflects:

- The volume of admissions and associated postcode for the consumer on admission to the Panorama Clinic only.
- Counts of all admissions within the specified period including a re-admission to the unit. Some patients were admitted more than once.
- The last 12 complete months which is measured from 1/12/2023 to 30/11/2024.
- There were 159 admissions to the Panorama Clinic in the last 12 months.
- To prevent patients in small towns or locations potentially being identified, postcodes with 2 or less patients have been combined in "Other".

Postcode	Location	Admissions
2650	Wagga Wagga	3
2794	Cowra	13
2795	Bathurst	71
2798	Millthorpe	4
2799	Blayney	4
2800	Orange	22
2850	Mudgee	8
2870	Parkes, Forbes	11
2871	Forbes	8
Various	Other	15
		159

- (40) A comprehensive assessment of a broad range of options was undertaken by the Western NSW Local Health District.
- (41) Fourteen Bathurst based facilities were considered as well as one non-facility based option and one facility option outside of Bathurst. Eleven of the fourteen properties did not progress to final evaluation because they did not have sufficient capacity, were not available or were unsuitable for the appropriate and safe establishment of a mental health facility. Three Bathurst properties were assessed in a final round of formal evaluation as well as one non-facility based option.
- I. St Joseph’s Heritage and Conference Centre, Perthville - Significant cost, extensive refurbishment required and isolation from hospital facilities.
 - II. The Grange Accommodation, Daly Street, Bathurst - Significant cost, extensive refurbishment required, no capacity for group programs.

- III. Bathurst Private Hospital commercial proposal - Significant cost, extensive construction requirements, considerable uncertainty risk.
 - IV. Non-facility option - Unable to meet requirements for the entire client group, limited geographic radius, operational delivery risks.
- (42) Australian Health Facility Guidelines HPU 136 Non Acute Mental Health Unit generic planning and design requirements.
- Access to 24/7 emergency medical care.
 - Operational viability.
- (43) All locations considered were temporary in nature. The voluntary mental health inpatient unit will be part of the redeveloped \$200 million Bathurst Health Service campus once complete.
- (44) Pandemic operations would have resulted in a fifty percent reduction in service capacity and a significant retrenchment of service availability to only those consumers residing within a 15km radius of the Bathurst Health Service campus. Consequently, the temporary pandemic model was not considered a viable option for the longer duration of the temporary decant period, could not be staffed alongside an inpatient model, and would not meet the need of the majority of service users, many of whom reside outside of the centre of Bathurst city.
- (45) This model was not considered to be viable for the reasons outlined. The WNSWLHD is investing in expanded Mental Health Consult Liaison Services and increased nursing staff for the voluntary inpatient mental health unit both of which it considers providing greater value for money for those people who need to access mental health care.
- (46) Yes.

Milton Ulladulla Hospital

- (47) Has the Minister visited Milton Ulladulla Hospital?
- (48) What commitments were made by the now Government regarding Milton Ulladulla Hospital prior to the last election?
- (49) Has a new CT scanner been delivered at Milton Ulladulla Hospital?
- (50) Has the upgrade of the Community Cancer Services Centre been complete?
- (51) Can the Minister or the Government instruct NSW Health to include particular health services within a master plan?
- (52) When will the master planning process at Milton Ulladulla Hospital be concluded?
- (53) Are you aware that the Illawarra Shoalhaven LHD is now encouraging mothers to have babies in their own homes?
- (54) Will the Government honour its commitment to return birthing services to Milton Ulladulla Hospital?

RESPONSE:

I am advised:

- (47) The Premier and Parliamentary Secretary for Health visited Milton Ulladulla Hospital in April 2023.
- (48) The NSW Government is committed to delivering new and expanded services at Milton Ulladulla Hospital with a \$7.5 million investment.
- (49) I refer the Member to the answer provided on notice for the September Budget Estimates hearing (Page 61 of responses).
- (50) I refer the Member to the answer provided on notice for the September Budget Estimates hearing (Page 62 of responses).
- (51) Health service planning by local health districts occurs in line with NSW Health's established policies and frameworks. The Minister for Health has the power under section 32(2) of the *Health Services Act 1997*, if the Minister is satisfied that it is in the public interest to do so, to direct a local health district to establish any hospital, health institution, health service or health support service.
- (52) The master planning process at the existing Milton Ulladulla Hospital has been completed.
- (53) In an effort to help deliver more birthing service options in the short to medium term, Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District recently expanded its Midwifery Group Practice model of care to include services for eligible women in the Shoalhaven region and is working towards introducing a home-birthing model for suitable, low-risk women. Once established, the home birth model will provide women with an additional choice for birthing care, in addition the option to birth at

Shoalhaven Hospital.

(54) Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District is reviewing maternity models of care for Milton Ulladulla Hospital, including birthing services. This includes assessing clinical safety, workforce, infrastructure and financial requirements to ensure a safe and high-quality service. Options for maternity models of care form part of the draft Health Service Plan. Community consultation on the draft Health Service Plan provided an opportunity to give feedback and discuss details. Community consultation started in September 2024 and is in progress.

IVF Rebate

- (55) Why was the decision made to significantly restrict which couples can receive the \$2,000 IVF rebates?
- (56) Was the introduction of an income test for the rebate a proposal instigated by Treasury or NSW Health?
- (57) Why was no full evaluation of the rebate program undertaken before mean testing was introduced?
- (58) Will a full evaluation of the program be undertaken before February 2025?
- (59) Did NSW Health recommend the rebate be means tested?
- (60) How many couples do you expect will be able to access the rebate under the revised eligibility criteria?
- (61) Has NSW Health done any modelling to support this?
- (62) The Minister has said more couples will have access under the new criteria. How many more?
- (63) Will any evaluation of the program be undertaken in its revised form to demonstrate it has led to greater uptake?
- (64) How many couple have accessed the rebate since it was introduced?
- (65) Has the Minister written to his federal counterpart to advocate for the Commonwealth to lower the cost of IVF treatment?

RESPONSE:

I am advised:

The Fertility Treatment Rebate commenced in January 2023 and was available to 12,000 eligible women. This commitment has been met.

As part of the 2024-25 NSW Budget, the NSW Government is investing \$52.2 million over 4 years to help eligible families undergoing fertility treatment by extending the Fertility Treatment Rebate. The extension is named Fertility Treatment Rebate – 2. The new extended rebate will be monitored.

Budget controls

(66) For the purpose of complying with NSW Treasury's Budget Control Framework (TPG-35) what is NSW Health's:

- a. Net Cost of Service Cap for 2024-25?
- b. Labor Expense Cap for 2024-25

(67) In calculating the Labor Expense Cap for 2024-25 what provision has been made for a wage rise for nurses and midwives?

RESPONSE:

I am advised:

(a) Net Cost of Service Cap for 2024-25 (Original Budget): \$18,890.8 million.

(b) Labor Expense Cap for 2024-25 (Original Budget): \$19,652.8 million.

There is a 3.5% provision including superannuation.

Nurses and Midwives Wages

(68) What would be the additional cost of the one-year 15% wage rise claim by the Nurses and Midwives Association above the provision made for a 10.5% wage rise over the three years 2024-25 to 2026-27 for:

- a. 2024-25;
- b. 2025-26; and
- c. 2026-27?

(69) How much has been budgeted for safer staffing ratios for each of these years:

- a. 2024-25;
- b. 2025-26; and
- c. 2026-27?

RESPONSE:

I am advised:

(68) The net cost of the 15% wage increase sought by the Nurses and Midwives' Association depends on the nature of the offsets and productivity outcomes identified as part of the Government's Mutual Gains Bargaining framework.

The NSW Government is taking significant steps to recognise the invaluable contributions of nurses and midwives and continues to work collaboratively with the Association.

(69) Safe Staffing Levels (SSL) represent one of the most significant reforms to the way we staff our hospital in decades and the Government has allocated over \$1 billion to deliver them.

Premix Drinks

(70) In relation to media reporting regarding guidelines which will be developed by Liquor & Gaming NSW regarding premix drinks:

- a. Did anyone within the Department of Health have any involvement in drafting these guidelines?
- b. Did the inclusion of taste and price as risk factors come as a result of engagement with the Department of Health?
- c. Did the Department of Health proactively engage L&G NSW on this matter?
 - i. If so, who directed the department to engage in this involvement?

RESPONSE:

I am advised:

In June 2024, as part of a consultation process, NSW Health provided a submission to Liquor and Gaming NSW that included collated evidence from public health researchers.

As an outcome of this consultation, Liquor and Gaming NSW developed the proposed liquor product and packaging guidelines. This was shared for comments on 20 November 2024 but Liquor and Gaming NSW has advised NSW Health this consultation process is on hold.