

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 2010-11, 23 February 2011

Question: E11-240

OUTCOME 0: Whole of Portfolio

Topic: COMPARISON OF NHHN AGREEMENT AND HEADS OF AGREEMENT ON HEALTH REFORM

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Senator Fierravanti-Wells asked:

Can I take the example of Gulgong Hospital in New South Wales? I do not know if any of your officers are aware – or you could perhaps take it on notice – that it was closed by the NSW Labor government. Did it close as a consequence of any proposed (ABF) changes or is it another one to attribute to the NSW government?

Answer:

Decisions regarding public hospitals in NSW are made by the NSW Government, not the Commonwealth. We note that Gulgong Hospital was part of the Greater Western Area Health Service, who released a statement on 11 August 2010 attributing the closure to health and safety issues, specifically:

“...the Greater Western Area Health Service must vacate from the Gulgong Hospital due to serious safety issues identified by a recent WorkCover inspection of the building.

"The decision to vacate the hospital has been made in the interest of the safety of patients and staff," said Mr O'Connor.

"A WorkCover inspection in March identified several safety notices for improvement with asbestos the issue of serious safety concern," he said.