

GLADESVILLE - MACQUARIE

AMALGAMATION

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STRATEGY - OPTION 1

The strategy must consider two aspects:

1. Local - Ivan Petch's reaction and the response of his electorate (a marginal Coalition seat);
2. Statewide - need to protect the Minister and Government generally.

LOCAL

Potential Problems

1. Ivan Petch has publicly advocated the retention and refurbishment of both hospitals. His credibility will be attacked and he may well publicly criticise the decision and be tempted to vote on an Opposition motion condemning the Government, as he will believe the move threatens his seat.
2. Apart from Mr Petch's possible response, the seat is marginal and must be held at the next election for the Coalition to retain government.
3. There will be major local public alarm about possible future use of the Gladesville site.

Solutions

Inevitably there will be a negative reaction initially to the amalgamation and reference to Ivan Petch's/the Coalition's promises.

However, the real long term issue, as for Strickland House, Vaucluse a few years ago, will be what the Government proposes to do with the vacated site.

Accordingly, the following is suggested:

1. The Minister seek the assistance of Michael Yabsley (MP for Vaucluse who experienced the whole Strickland House issue).
2. The Minister and Mr Yabsley meet with Mr Petch to explain the amalgamation and the real issue for him as the local MP.
3. Offer Mr Petch a solution to this issue, including ongoing assistance from Yabsley and the Minister's office.

The solution could include:

- (a) Ivan Petch heading a community consultative committee to consider the future use of the site. A decision would need to be made as to whether this was open ended or subject to parameters. For example a requirement could be to examine particular community needs - elderly - suitable accommodation, senior citizens centre etc; cultural; sport; community health (eg; therapy centre), possible private sector involvement; preservation of heritage buildings etc.
- (b) The Minister could announce an immediate use of the existing buildings which would likely be acceptable to community - such use might only be short to medium term.

- (c) Either separately or in conjunction with the above, the Minister could announce he was seeking advice from National Trust and similar 'warm and friendly' organisations re future use of buildings/site - thus delaying decision for future.
- (d) A variation on (a) and (c) could be to form a committee of such people to advise the Minister.
- (e) Refer to positive effect on property values of removal of hospital.

In any of these options, Ivan Petch can be portrayed favourably as protecting the community's interests in the site's future.

STATE WIDE

1. Problem

Industrial: In his budget speech, September 15, Premier Fahey promised no further retrenchments of 'core' government departmental employees for 12 months.

Solution

Provision was made for voluntary redundancy packages, redeployment with retraining where appropriate and natural attrition. To reduce political fall-out the following is recommended:

the announcement stresses NO compulsory retrenchments, in keeping with the Premier's promise; early involvement of Labor Council sought;

Mr Fahey's office should be alerted in advance;

staff should be properly briefed just before the announcement with consideration for those who may not speak English adequately.

2. Problem

Closure of Gladesville perceived as further downgrading of public hospitals.

Solution

never use the term closure - always speak of amalgamation;

announcement should be made by local administrator and portrayed as a local decision made for local reasons;

if possible, indicate that savings will be retained in Mental Health - indicate where;

while not referring to the report on patient abuse, refer to the fact that Gladesville is physically an out-moded mid-Victorian facility inappropriate for current standards of care, while Macquarie, which is NSW's most modern psychiatric hospital, will be expanded. Third party clinician and other support could be mobilised.

3. Problem

Patients/Carers (families) will fear what will happen to patients.

Solution

Ensure patients/carers are contacted simultaneously with employees and stress all patients will be provided with appropriate care - Macquarie or community based residential. Also provide 12 hour info-line and contact Macquarie carers too for reassurance.

4. Problem

Perception that community based care has failed - people turned out on to streets to fend for themselves or threat to security of community.

Solution

Provide information on growth in number of community based places over past years. Explain nature of care and point to success stories and philosophy which treats people as people not patients and limits institutionalisation to those who cannot function otherwise or who may be a threat to themselves or others.

CONCLUSION

The potential long term problem applies locally only and can be satisfactorily resolved as recommended. There will inevitably be immediate fall-out but that should not cause lasting political damage - both the Minister and Mr Petch need to be encouraged to realise this.

MEDIA STRATEGY

As it can be expected there will be opposition, mainly local, to the amalgamations of the two hospitals, a media strategy is needed to dovetail with the political and industrial strategies to ensure the most positive message possible is transmitted to the public.

The media strategy will reinforce the political strategy in portraying the amalgamations as a positive step by the Government and the Health Department for the community and the patients.

As the residents of the areas are among the most active and vocal in the metropolitan area special attention must be given to radio commentators and talk back programs.

Also, given the predilection of television news and current affairs programs for medical and health stories there will be more than usual interest in the amalgamation.

Because of these points, and the fact that the media generally adopts the theme of the first story on a particular topic, we must be proactive and set the agenda rather than being reactive to others.

After all the positive factors of the industrial and political strategies are determined, a briefing must be given to The Sydney Morning Herald, The Northern Herald and the Northern District Times. The political strategy will determine who should give the briefing - the Minister's Office, the local MP Ivan Petch, or a representative of the Department. The briefing should be given for The Sydney Morning Herald on the morning of the announcement. For the other outlets it should be given on the day of their deadlines.

The Minister's Office will need to be actively involved because that is where members of the Parliamentary Press Gallery will go once the story is out. However, it is recommended that the Executive Director, Christine Thomas, and Ivan Petch jointly brief the local media as this will both "localise" the issue and ensure Mr Petch is locked in to the department's strategy. It may be necessary for both the Minister and Michael Yabsley to convince Mr Petch he should be involved in the initial briefing. He must also be told that the initial briefing will set the scene for subsequent media coverage.

As well, because of the public stance of Mr Petch, and the fact his seat is a marginal Government seat, media interest (and indeed Opposition interest) will be heightened. As a result, setting the agenda for the amalgamations is all the more essential.

Following the initial briefing, the content of which would be based on the proposed political strategy, the amalgamation announcement would be made and a major media effort recommended. If the Minister wishes to make the announcement it will be done at Parliament House (or Department of Health, North Sydney). If he does not want to be involved initially then the announcement can be made at Gladesville where the television pictures can reinforce both our messages of poor existing conditions and the retention of heritage buildings.

All the radio talk back programs (especially the ABC) would be targeted to ensure the "positive" message is conveyed to the public at large and the local community in particular.

We must set the scene where a caring government is taking action in the best interests of patients and the community. If we do not, our opponents will quickly expose the media to a patient (or carer) who will tell a tale of woe and despair which will result from the closure of Gladesville. And it is the term "closure" that we have to avoid and prevent at all times, under this option.

Each of the problems and solutions outlined in the political strategy can be developed into stories and targeted at metropolitan and local media.

As well, if local opposition begins to grow then we should examine the production and distribution of a newsletter letterboxed to the local area outlining the positive aspects of the amalgamation.

We must keep the local community informed of each step in the processes outlined in the political strategy and gain as high a level of support as possible.

The proposed strategy can be summarised as:

- . Initial pre-announcement briefing by Ivan Petch and Chris Thomas
- . Announcement
- . Post announcement radio blitz
- . Post announcement local media story opportunities
- . Post announcement metropolitan media events and pre-empting of union campaign
- . Possible newsletter to local community

MEDIA TRAINING

Media training, based on the actual issues and the proposed responses, should be undertaken by both Chris Thomas and Ivan Petch and the selected spokesperson from the Northern Sydney Area Health Service.

ISSUES

Potential media issues are:

- . The report into existing operations, staff, etc
- . Industrial unrest
- . A patient or carer human interest story placed by opponents to the amalgamation
- . Developments at Macquarie Hospital
- . Availability of adequate community homes to take up any perceived shortfall created by the closure

To counter these issues we need:

1. To be proactive and take the media initiative
2. Briefing and workshopping of potential responses

STRATEGY - OPTION 2

SUMMARY

Option 2 (in Rowland's view, the preferred option) places the Minister as the focal point.

Using the Complaints Unit Report, he acts as the 'White Knight' righting the wrongs of the past that have harmed rank and file staff as well as patients.

While the Minister takes the running initially, Mr Petch and Chris Thomas and/or Tina Clifton would follow up locally as suggested in Option 1.

RAITONALE

The Report

It is clear that many people have knowledge of the Complaints Unit Report, if not directly then indirectly.

It is folly to believe that by excluding reference to it in any amalgamation announcement, it will not become an issue any way. In fact the demand by the Gladesville Nurses for its release, reinforces the validity of this option.

Politically, it is a redeeming feature of the report that there is ample ammunition for the Minister to justify closing Gladesville and transferring its responsibilities to Macquarie. Whereas in the other option the term 'amalgamation' was recommended, in this option it is advised against as it suggests Gladesville's problems will simply become Macquarie's.

Therefore terms like 'closing the door on the Dickensian era' and 'fresh start' should be used to stress that this is not just a superficial operation to save money or simply a cover up of the underlying problem.

THE ANNOUNCEMENT

When - as soon as possible. The matter, particularly related to the Report could blow up at any time. If the Minister is not seen to be taking the initiative, he will be hard pressed to offer a credible defence for the delay and apparent unwillingness to respond decisively to human suffering, conspiracy, incompetence, intimidation etc.

Should other potentially difficult issues arise, they would be lost in Christmas - and in any case, the story is likely to get a big run for a few days, with the media unlikely to be interested in later developments - excepting local media on local issues.

Where - It would have been preferable for the Minister to have used the forum of Parliament for this announcement. However, as Parliament is now in recess until February, this option can still be implemented. While desirable, it is not essential to use Parliament.

Given the approach recommended, the Minister has nothing to fear from the content of the report. The only concern is sub judice.

The Content

Quoting from the executive summary of the report provides more than adequate support for the following points:

The Minister is acting to protect:

1. Patients

They have suffered abuse and at best outmoded care.

2. Staff

Those courageous enough to speak out have been persecuted; those who want to do the right thing but unwilling to speak out have been muzzled through intimidation; the majority of staff have not been properly trained and supported because of poor management - they deserve a fresh start having probably suffered lack of job satisfaction and disillusionment.

A major retraining program will be offered to those rank and file staff not wishing to take voluntary redundancy. Reference to lessons from Aradale, Victoria would be appropriate - person from Victoria who had part revealing similar problem there could be featured as commencing the retraining.

3. Physical Environment

Buildings are Dickensian - totally unsuited to modern and humane treatment. Site is isolated, reinforcing negative attributes (see Barclay Report - Official Visitors Report in Appendix). You can not divorce the physical from the moral environment. There is only one solution - physical relocation and management overhaul.


4. Amalgamation

This was being considered, but for several years hence. Amalgamation would have meant a joining of 'equals' - having read the report there is no way the Minister could countenance this - it would only risk spreading the problem like a disease. Therefore this is closure - but done in such a way that every patient will be guaranteed care in either a supported community residence, or at Macquarie which will be expanded and upgraded to look after current Gladesville patients. Any savings from the Gladesville closure will be retained in the psychiatric/mental health budget.

5. Future Use of Gladesville

- As for Option 1.

IVAN PETCH

Given his recent comments opposing the Government's decision to close two wards and eventually eliminate one site, it will be very difficult to get Petch back on side without a major incentive. The use of the Complaints Unit Report as recommended above provides that incentive, as  Petch should be persuaded that he can not be seen to support the retention of such a discredited facility. It also gives him a way out without losing face.

Otherwise, the strategy suggested for him in Option 1 is still appropriate.

MEDIA STRATEGY

1. Pre-briefing of 7.30 Report, giving them access to information and Gladesville on morning of Minister's announcement.
2. Preparation of media release for gallery distribution immediately following announcement and concurrent with Media Conference.
3. Readiness to show media over Gladesville for appropriate camera shots.
4. Line up likely third party support (list as suggested by Chris Thomas).
5. Have Minister ready to respond to media enquiries over following 24 hours.
6. Direct media wishing to enquire about industrial issues to another spokesman; enquiries re future of site to Mr Petch or other spokesman. Minister should not get involved with specifics on these issues other than as indicated above.

POSSIBLE PROBLEMS

Unions

Management only is being singled out for criticism. Rank and file are being treated sympathetically. Unions would have to accept this as positive.

Strategy otherwise as for Option 1.

Patient/Carer Anxiety

Strategy as per Option 1.

Also seek to telephone all Gladesville carers on day of announcement and write to Macquarie carers to reassure them.

Reason for delay in Minister Acting

This should not come up initially due to the gravity of the central issue. Later the story will be dead and Christmas will affect all news.

In any case, answer is that Minister realised immediate action depends on proper planning - where to place patients, retraining program for former staff etc. Not to do so would be irresponsible.

CONCLUSION

The targets and issues of both options can best be summarised as:

<u>Target</u>	Staff	Patients/Carers	Residents
<u>Issues</u>	Policy/Training	Care/Conditions	Land future?

Unless there is a strategy to explain the issues to the relevant targets, the broader strategy will be unacceptable to the Minister and his advisers.

Therefore responses on staff policy, training and counselling as well as future patient care and conditions is required. For residents the issues will be the future of the land - open space, the spectre of medium density residential development etc. When these concerns are addressed, there will be the basis for a strong campaign.

BIOGRAPHIES

SEAN BARRETT

Chief Executive Officer, The Rowland Company

Before joining The Rowland Company Sean was an advisor to the Tasmanian Minister for Health and the State's Health Department on the handling of sensitive issues such as AIDS. He also handled communications during a controversy involving agricultural chemicals and accusations that aerial spraying was causing birth defects and cancer in some rural communities.

Sean was also part of an advisory group to all Australia's Health Ministers on the formulation and implementation of new health warnings on cigarette packages and in advertising.

Sean was also heavily involved in with the forest products industry in Tasmania during and after the Franklin Dam controversy.

With a previous consultancy he planned a long-term public relations program for Australian Newsprint Mills, the country's largest producer of newsprint. This program centred on defending the company's practices from attack on environmental grounds through the use of education programs, print communications and the media. He also worked on environmental issues with APPM, the giant fine papers producer and did a project on toxic waste for the EZ company.

Sean has worked extensively on issues management in the environmentally sensitive forest industries and health sector.

He was a consultant to one of Australia's largest paper producers at a time when the company was coming under increasing pressure from the environment movement over the use of forest resources.

IAN CROPPER

Joint Managing Director, The Rowland Company, Sydney
Head - Issues & Public Affairs

Ian has more than 18 years experience in the communications industry including spells in journalism, advertising agencies and public relations consultancies.

He also spent 12 months with one of Australia's largest management consultancies and, for five years, was joint principal of his own advertising agency and public relations consultancy specialising in business-to-business and industrial communication.

In addition to issues and crisis management, his areas of expertise include communication strategy and planning, media relations and print production.

Ian has consulted to clients in both the public and private sector - from major manufacturers, State Government departments and the professions, to property developers, international real estate groups, industry associations and pharmaceutical companies.

Major campaigns he has been involved in over the past few years include:

- . A national program to promote the benefits of the construction of a third runway at Sydney's Kingsford Smith Airport and, in the process, countering criticism from environmental groups, residents and certain State and Federal politicians.

- . An extensive community relations program relating to the relocation of the Royal Australian Navy's Eastern Seaboard fleet from Sydney to Jervis Bay. Situated some 160 kms south of Sydney, Jervis Bay is a natural deepwater harbour. The move faced criticism from the major environmental groups because of potential damage to the ecosystem of the area.
- . An on-going issues management and education campaign for Kimberly-Clark - Australia's major manufacturer of toilet and facial tissue and disposable nappies. This has involved an extensive State and Federal government relations campaign, the production of literature and in-store display material, media relations and sponsorship.

Since joining The Rowland Company, Ian's major focus has been creating a specific division which concentrates on issues management and public affairs. His current clients include Kimberly-Clark, British Telecom, Johnson & Johnson, Sandoz Pharmaceuticals, Castrol and the Australian Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association.

Ian also represent Australia on Rowland Worldwide's Environmental Affairs Specialist Council and its Crisis and Issues Management Practice Group.

GUY YEOMANS

Government Relations/Public Affairs Specialist

Guy Yeomans commenced working life as a school teacher following completion of a BA degree majoring in history and government from Sydney University and a Diploma of Education. He also completed a post graduate English Major at the University of New England.

In 1984 he was elected as State Liberal Member for Hurstville. In Opposition, (1984-88) Guy served as Chairman of the Parliamentary Liberal Party's Education, Drugs Review and Family Policy Committees.

When the Coalition won Government in 1988, Guy was appointed Deputy Chairman of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Regulation Review, which included the framing of landmark legislation to commence the review process followed by analysis of all new regulations. He was also Chairman of the Government Members' Education Committee and a member of the Government Members' Corrective Services and Transport Committees.

In 1989, Guy participated in a Commonwealth Parliamentary Association study tour of the United States, Canada, Holland and France examining issues such as corrective services, drugs, parent education and educational administration.

He left Parliament in 1991 when his electorate was abolished after a redistribution of boundaries. However, he maintains excellent contact with NSW Government Ministers and officials, the Opposition and Labor Council as well as contacts with the Federal Opposition.

BRIAN DALE

Special Consultant

Brian Dale has been employed on the "Daily Telegraph" as a feature writer, Australian Associated Press as a senior journalist and the "Australian Financial Review" as a feature and editorial writer. In 1974 he joined Neville Wran as Press Secretary and worked with Wran for seven and a half years in Opposition and in Government. As Press Secretary to the Premier he had overall supervision of not only all public relations and marketing campaigns involving the Premier, but for the rest of the State Government.

He left the NSW Government to take up an appointment in charge of Special Projects with News Limited. This involved working closely with Rupert Murdoch in Sydney, New York and London as well as with the Australian Managing Director, Ken Cowley, on television projects, including being Executive Producer of a multi-million dollar international current affairs program.

In 1983 he was asked to assist in the Federal election campaign, working with the then Opposition Leader and ex-Prime Minister, Bob Hawke. Following the 1983 campaign he has been employed on many State and Federal political and departmental campaigns as well as television production, communications strategies and public relations advice for the private sector.

He has also written a book "Ascent to Power" which covered the relationship between Neville Wran and the media. The book has now become a text for final year students in communications, journalism and political science in several universities and colleges of advanced education throughout Australia.

BUDGET

The Rowland Company's fee structure is based on the seniority of the personnel working on the program. This varies from \$220 per hour for a senior director down to \$60 for support staff input. This is as follows:

Director	\$220
Group Manager	\$160
Account Executive	\$130
Support Staff	\$60

Fees are charged monthly in arrears and disbursements either monthly in arrears or, where a particular cost is higher than normal, billed out in advance. Out of pocket expenses are charged monthly.

Based on the program outlined above, the professional fees component for either Option 1 or Option 2 will be in the region of:

. Media Training/Issues Bible	\$
Preparation of core document and issues bible:	\$1,400
Half-day training program:	\$2,110
Film crew and equipment hire:	\$850
Total:	\$4,360
. Managing The Announcement	
Research and writing of press and community announcements, briefing documentation, etc.	\$2,540
Media relations, counsel, liaison with third parties	\$2,960
Total:	\$5,500

Follow-up Counsel and Issues Management Support	\$
Billed at an hourly rate, but estimated to cover four hours per week for eight weeks:	\$5,120
Total:	\$5,120
PROFESSIONAL FEES:	\$14,980
Allowance for general out of pocket expenses including faxes; phone calls; courier fees; photocopies, etc.	\$1,800
<u>PROGRAM TOTAL:</u>	<u>\$16,780</u>