

Opening Ceremony - St John of God Midland Public Hospital

Friday 20 November 2015

1. Welcome

- The Hon Colin Barnett - Premier of Western Australia
- His Grace, Archbishop Timothy Costelloe, Archdiocese of Perth
- Distinguished guests already acknowledged
- Ladies and gentlemen.

2. Introduction

- What a wonderful day! I am delighted to be here as part of this great celebration, on this momentous occasion. A day to celebrate indeed.
- This beautiful hospital is the result of hard work, planning and collaboration by our own people, government and our partners.
- It's been shaped with input from representatives of this diverse community that it will shortly serve. And it represents a big step forward for St John of God Health Care.

3. Sisters of St John of God

- Many people here today are already aware that our organisation's founding story is the story of the Sisters of St John of God, many of whom are here today.
- I would like to share a story. On Monday next week, the day before this hospital opens, it will be exactly 120 years since the first Sisters of St John of God arrived in this state from Ireland.



- Eight women, with an average age of 30, (21-40) arrived at the request of Perth's Bishop Gibney to meet the needs of a young and rapidly growing colony, which was experiencing severe outbreaks of typhoid and other illnesses. They came to nurse the sick and destitute. They arrived by ship, the SS Orizaba, after a 35-day ocean journey, disembarked at Albany, and then came by road to Perth.
- The pioneer Sisters established their first residence in Adelaide Terrace, which was both home and hospital, and assisted those in need in any way they could.
- From their Perth base, they went to the Goldfields in Kalgoorlie the following year to help the miners who were participating in a huge gold mining rush.
- They founded our Subiaco Hospital in 1898.
- Then as now with Midland, the people of Perth were responding to develop the infrastructure needs of the booming Colony. They journeyed up north to the Kimberley in 1907, and travelled over to the eastern states in 1915, where they established our Ballarat Hospital.

4. Public health

- The Sisters' strong ethos of public service, active in service to the community, is one that still guides us in our provision of people-centred health care.
- Since those early days, SJGHC has been involved in public health care for many years. We currently have many partnerships to administer public health services with State and Federal Governments in WA, Victoria and New South Wales and also in New Zealand.
- It's, therefore, not new for a Catholic or not-for-profit health provider to operate public hospitals and there are currently 21 public hospitals around Australia operated by Catholic health care providers.



- It's very important for us as a mission-based, not for profit organisation to be involved in public health. In Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane, large Catholic hospitals are an important part of the public health system in those cities.

5. Community hospital

- We started this process some five years ago, and it's very exciting to now be at this point where we are about to open the hospital's doors and admit our first patients. I had the opportunity to walk through this hospital last Saturday with our Hospital CEO, Glen Power. No staff, no patients, but some service personnel who were checking the plumbing. And, as Glen talked about the planning and building story of the past few years, it struck me that what has shaped our approach to this hospital is that it is a community hospital.
- This hospital is open to all and has been designed and built to reflect a sense of inclusiveness and to cater for a diverse population.
- We have engaged extensively with different parts of the community to make sure that the hospital is a culturally welcoming and secure place to all, including the many Aboriginal people that are part of the catchment population served by the hospital.
- We have actively engaged with consumer groups and others who have an interest in the hospital and have conducted nearly 200 tours of the hospital as it was being built over the past three years.
- Our belief in holistic care means there are multi-faith spaces available for reflection. We've engaged with leaders of all major faiths to ensure an ecumenical approach and also recognise that some people do not have formal faith or a structured religion but do have spiritual needs.



- We have a strong belief in the value of arts and health and we have established beautiful art works that will help make this hospital a place that is welcoming and stimulating for patients, families, visitors, caregivers and doctors.
- There are spaces that can be used for public purposes, for performances and other community purposes. There is also a wonderful children's playground, designed with input from Woodbridge Primary School.
- We believe that as a nationally recognised high quality health provider, with strong roots in Western Australia and world class aspirations that we have a lot to offer this community and our government partners.

6. High benchmarks/hurdles

- We are thus delighted and proud to have been chosen as the State Government's partner in this wonderful project and we take the responsibility that has been bestowed upon us seriously.
- When the Sisters were running the hospitals, no doctor, no nurse, no caregiver was immune from the very high standards that the Sisters set. Reflecting this Sisters' tradition, and as a very good corporate citizen, we have set very high performance benchmarks for this Hospital. Stretch targets as we call it in business speak.
- We will be excellent stewards of the resources that government has entrusted us with.
- We will be an outstanding employer of the caregivers who make up the St John of God Midland Public Hospital workforce and welcome with open arms those from Swan District Hospital, various St John of God hospitals, those from overseas and those from elsewhere.



- We will be a great partner to the community of which we have become a part.
- We will provide compassionate care to everyone who walks through our doors, and we will provide clinical excellence.
- Our hospital will provide a haven for the sick and injured of this community.
- Midland Public Hospital will be a place where healing and compassion are dispensed in equal measure, a place where patients are treated as people first and a diagnosis second. This is the example given to us by the Sisters - and it's the example that forms the basis of how care is provided in all St John of God hospitals.
- And we look forward to serving this community exceptionally well for the next 20 years and beyond, well into the future.

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