

## Response to question on notice

### Questions on Notice Paper No 12

**24 October 2025**

**Question No. 688**

**PETER CAIN MLA:** To ask the Minister for Health -

1. Why is there still no timeline, no funding, and no clarity for families four months after the Government accepted the recommendation for a standalone northside birth centre.
2. Why will the \$1 billion northside hospital not include full paediatric services, requiring Belconnen and Gungahlin families to travel across town to Woden for care.
3. How does the Minister justify what appears to be ongoing neglect of northside families' basic healthcare needs.
4. How many announcements have been made by the Government regarding northside health services in the past three years, and how many of these have been fully delivered.
5. Will the Minister guarantee that both the standalone birth centre and full paediatric services will be in place when the northside hospital opens; if not, what is the expected timeline for delivery of these services

**RACHEL STEPHEN-SMITH MLA** - The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

1. The Northside Hospital Project is currently in the planning and design phase of the project, with a further Business Case being developed for the 2026-27 Budget process. The Business Case will outline the proposed investment strategy, staging and project inclusions. Further consultation will be undertaken on detailed design in 2026, which will include a proposed solution for the birth centre. As the birth centre will be delivered as part of the Northside Hospital project, funding is included in the project budget.
2. Paediatrics will be catered for in the Emergency Department of the new Northside Hospital with a dedicated 23-hour short stay service. However, specialist paediatric services will continue to be delivered at the Canberra Hospital with dedicated staff, facilities and equipment. Centenary Hospital for Women and Children includes specialised paediatric services that support not only the ACT but also the surrounding region of NSW. It is not feasible to duplicate these services at the new Northside Hospital, and it would be inefficient and unsafe to fragment paediatric services across two hospital sites.
3. I reject the premise of the question and direct the member to the response to question 4.

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#### 4. 2022-23

- Feasibility study to establish new health centres to provide community-based services located in the North Gungahlin and West Belconnen - [New Walk-In Health Centres to offer Canberrans care where they need it - Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate](#)
- Expansion of the Childhood Early Intervention Program (CEIP) into the Gungahlin area. The CEIP teams are co-located at Gungahlin Child and Family Centre's and providing in-reach into Gungahlin primary schools. [Our Canberra - Gungahlin August 2022](#).
- Expansion of the Police Ambulance and Clinician Early Response (PACER), to be able to meet the growing demand across the Territory including North Canberra. [Better care for our community, with continuation of second PACER team - Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate](#)

#### 2023-24

- Commissioning of a new endoscopy procedure room at North Canberra Hospital to boost procedures and expanding capacity across the ACT. The project included refurbishment of an existing endoscopy procedure room, upgrade of waiting and consultation rooms and new medical equipment - <https://www.canberrahealthservices.act.gov.au/about-us/media-centre/news/news-items/2024/june/nch-endoscopy>
- Announcement of more than \$1 billion investment to progress the New Northside Hospital project, to commence construction mid-decade. [Building a new northside hospital and a more efficient health system - Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate](#) the Northside Hospital Project is underway.
- North Canberra Hospital has made a wider range of reproductive health services for women, including emergency contraception (often known as “the morning after pill”) available to consumers who present to the emergency department.
- The Diabetes in Pregnancy Program at North Canberra Hospital (formerly CPHB) commenced in September 2023. Before September 2023, all women accessing maternity care at Calvary Public Hospital Bruce (CPHB) who had a diagnosis of Gestational Diabetes Mellitus (GDM) were required to attend Centenary Hospital for diabetes education. The services were funded for 2.25 FTE of nurses and 0.8 FTE for a dietitian.
- The Centenary Hospital for Women and Children (CHWC) provides a homebirth program for women or birthing persons who live in the eligible catchment area for homebirths was expanded to include northside residents on 15 September 2023. To access a homebirth, women or birthing people must reside within 30 mins drive of either CHWC or NCH, this requirement is to ensure patient safety. Women who live on the Northside can access home birth through the homebirth program that runs out of the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children as the midwife provides care in the home. There is provision should the woman need to be transferred to hospital due to a situation arising during labour that her homebirth midwife can follow her to North Canberra hospital however in practice this is extremely rare.

#### 2024-25

- Redevelopment and expansion of sterilising services at North Canberra Hospital to ensure compliance with contemporary standards and meet increased demand.
- Delivery of a state-of-the-art new Northside Hospital Project and announcement of the Very Early Contractor Involvement (VECI) design partner Multiplex in March 2025. [New northside hospital early delivery partner - Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate](#)
- Commitment to a new Birth Centre as part of the Northside Hospital Project with the release of the Birth Centre feasibility study in May 2025. [Northside birth centre feasibility study released - Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate](#)

- Watson Health Precinct
  - September 2023 – Development Application submitted  
[https://www.cmtedd.act.gov.au/open\\_government/inform/act\\_government\\_media\\_releases/rachel-stephen-s...](https://www.cmtedd.act.gov.au/open_government/inform/act_government_media_releases/rachel-stephen-s...)
  - September 2024 – Conditional approval and head contractor appointed  
[https://www.cmtedd.act.gov.au/open\\_government/inform/act\\_government\\_media\\_releases/rachel-stephen-s...](https://www.cmtedd.act.gov.au/open_government/inform/act_government_media_releases/rachel-stephen-s...)
  - May 2025 – Construction officially began on the new precinct  
[https://www.cmtedd.act.gov.au/open\\_government/inform/act\\_government\\_media\\_releases/rachel-stephen-s...](https://www.cmtedd.act.gov.au/open_government/inform/act_government_media_releases/rachel-stephen-s...)
  - All services are on track to be completed mid-2026.
- In June 2024, ACT Government announced the Casey site for the new North Gungahlin Health Centre and Community consultation commenced via YourSay to gather feedback on service needs and design priorities.  
[https://www.cmtedd.act.gov.au/open\\_government/inform/act\\_government\\_media\\_releases/yvette-berry-mla...](https://www.cmtedd.act.gov.au/open_government/inform/act_government_media_releases/yvette-berry-mla...)

2025-26

- In the 2025-26 Budget, the ACT Government provided ongoing funding for the WOKE program, delivered at the University of Canberra. This program provides Dialectical Behavioural Therapy (DBT) for young people aged 15 to 21 experiencing difficulties with emotional regulation and at risk of developing borderline personality disorder.
- New initiatives will provide funding for the establishment of a new Medical Imaging Outpatient Service at the Belconnen Community Health Centre providing community access to ultrasound and x-rays.
- Commitment to continuing services at the Belconnen Safe Haven and to expand the operating hours of the service. The Belconnen Safe Haven provides a safe space for people over 16 to access mental health support from peer workers in a calm and caring, non-clinical environment. The Safe Haven helps to reduce the need for people to present to emergency departments or other crisis services. The commitment includes funding in 2026-27 for an evaluation of Safe Havens in the context of the ACT.
  - The expansion of the service includes operation with an additional day of service on Monday and earlier daily opening hours. The service is now open six days per week from Monday to Saturday, 2pm to 10pm.
- As of February 2025, NCH runs a High-Risk Breast Clinic that provides a foundation for future service growth. It offers a surgeon-led service that coordinates breast management for eligible patients, including surgery and risk-reducing medications. Public surveillance imaging is provided in partnership with Canberra Hospital Breast Imaging Unit and private imaging providers in the community.

\* Please note that due to time constraints, this is not an exhaustive list.

5. Please refer to the response to questions 1 and 2.

Approved for circulation to the Member and incorporation into Hansard.



Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA  
Minister for Health

Date:

3/12/25

This response required 520 mins to complete, at an approximate cost of \$986.02