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Bed losses denial

By **PETER GARDINER**

NOOSA Hospital's emergency services department will close in

July, 2021, and a cloud will hang over all its public hospital beds if the State Government implements the Sunshine Coast's future

hospital health care blueprint.

Noosa Greens candidate Joe Shlegeris said after viewing the Sunshine Coast

Hospital and Health Services current and future health service needs document, it points to the Ramsay Healthcare

operated hospital being run on a strictly private basis after the state 2020/21 funding allocations end.

But the LNP Government

has flatly denied the claim and Member for Noosa Glen Elmes said it simply would not happen.

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Greens claim beds to go

FROM PAGE 1

MR ELMES said the Greens candidate should deal "in fact not fiction" if he wants to be taken seriously in the upcoming state election.

On Wednesday, Health Minister Lawrence Springborg said: "There is absolutely no suggestion and absolutely no likelihood that services for public patients at Noosa would cease or desist after 2020 – all that is demonstrated here is the lack of knowledge by a very green, Greens candidate."

But Mr Shlegeris begged to differ: "The LNP Government plans to close the Noosa public hospital and the emergency department."

"Half of the beds in the Noosa Hospital are public beds."

"When they go, the hospital will lose other essential and specialist services because there won't be enough patients to support them. We will no longer have any intensive care facility."

"With no emergency department, all critically ill

patients will be forced to endure a long trip to either Nambour or Sippy Downs," he said.

The forward plan presented by Professor Paul Thomas, the chair of Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Board, and Kevin Hegarty, chief executive of Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service, supported Mr Shlegeris's claims.

"However (it is assumed) Noosa emergency services for public patients will not continue after 2020/21."

—Document

In the emergency care section it states: "Note that the future role of Noosa in the care of public patients is not within the scope of this plan."

"It will be determined at a later date."

"However, the graph (of emergency services projected demand at the Coast's hospitals) above assumes that Noosa emergency services for public patients will not continue after 2020/21."

This section also notes that Noosa emergency department predestinations for public patients will be expected to transition to Nambour General Hospital from 2020/21, "when the contract with the HHS (Hospital and Health Services) expires".

To reinforce Mr Shlegeris's concern, the future needs plan details Noosa Hospital's projected public patient activity as 6729 patients in 2016/17, but for 2021/22 and 2026/27 it only has the letters "TBD".

The Greens candidate said the document was not secret and believed both the LNP and the Labor opposition must be aware of these plans but have said nothing.

See P5, for Lawrence Springborg's comments.



CONCERN: Greens candidate Joe Shlegeris warns of Noosa Hospital public section closure.

PHOTO: GEOFF POTTER

Funding cut would mean long hauls

QUEENSLAND Health paid Ramsay Healthcare to operate about half of the beds in the hospital as public beds, according to the Greens Noosa state candidate Joe Shlegeris, who took aim at his LNP rival and sitting MP Glen Elmes.

"Recently we saw photos

of our local member reclining in the back of an ambulance. Well he should do so, because anyone who has to ride in an ambulance will have a long ride indeed.

"Imagine suffering chest pain or a suspected stroke, or a serious injury, and facing a 40 minute drive to

hospital," Ms Shlegeris said.

"Imagine the difficulty faced by older people, especially those who don't drive. They won't be able to get themselves to the hospital, and they'll face a big hurdle getting all the way down there to visit their loved ones."