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THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works

REPORT

relating to the proposed construction of an

OUTPATIENTS' CLINIC

at

Repatriation General Hospital
Greenslopes, Queensland

(THIRTY-THIRD REPORT OF 1972)

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PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

OUTPATIENTS' CLINIC,
REPATRIATION GENERAL HOSPITAL,
GREENSLOPES, QUEENSLAND

R E P O R T

By resolution on 19 September 1972, the Senate referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works for investigation and report to the Parliament, the proposal to construct an outpatients clinic and other building extensions at the Repatriation General Hospital, Greenslopes, Brisbane, Queensland.

The Committee have the honour to report as follows:

THE REFERENCE

1. The proposal referred to the Committee involves the addition of a single storey wing to the administration building for an outpatients clinic and extension of and alterations to the same building to permit expansion of the radiology, pharmacy and pathology departments and administrative functions. The proposal will provide an additional 55,000 square feet of space.
2. The work is estimated to cost \$1.7 million.

THE COMMITTEE'S INVESTIGATION

3. The Committee received written submissions and drawings from the Repatriation Department and the Department of Works and took evidence from their representatives at a public hearing in Canberra on 10 October 1972. A written submission was received from Dr Laurel Macintosh, Ophthalmic Surgeon and consultant to the Department.

4. Before the hearing the Committee had inspected facilities at the hospital and the site proposed for the new work.

5. The Committee's proceedings will be printed as Minutes of Evidence.

THE REPATRIATION DEPARTMENT

6. The Repatriation Department is responsible under the Repatriation Act and associated legislation for the administration of benefits available to eligible persons and their dependants. Its services include hospital treatment for disabilities accepted as due to or associated with war service and under certain conditions, treatment and care for disabilities not due to war service.

7. The Department provides inpatient treatment at its own institutions in each State wherever practicable, enabling investigatory and treatment functions to be effectively carried out without undue encroachment on general community facilities. The Department has established a large general hospital in each capital city and except for Tasmania has a smaller auxiliary hospital in each State. Limited use is made of other hospitals for inpatient treatment, mainly in country areas but wide use is made of other general community medical services including local medical officers, pharmacists and dentists.

REPATRIATION GENERAL HOSPITAL, GREENSLOPES

8. The hospital is situated five miles from the Brisbane GPO on the slope of Mount Stephens in the suburb of Greenslopes. The grounds cover some 28 acres and are bounded by Newdegate, Nicholson and Denman Streets and includes an area west of Peach Street.

9. The hospital, originally the 112th Australian General Hospital, was erected during 1941-42 for the treatment of members of the armed forces. It was taken over by the Repatriation Department in 1947 and now has a capacity of 535 beds. It provides a full range of services in general medicine and surgery fields, including treatment for both acute and long term patients and has special facilities for psychiatry, medical rehabilitation and intensive therapy.

10. The hospital is a medical undergraduate teaching hospital for the University of Queensland and undertakes training of student nurses and male and female nursing aides.

11. The building complex comprises a multi-storey administration block, 19 wards built on the pavilion principle, nurses and medical officers quarters, a paramedical centre, a chapel, RALAC (Repatriation Artificial Limb and Appliance Centre), auxiliary buildings including a laundry, boiler house, stores and mortuary and some sporting facilities.

12. The hospital maintains a fairly high level of use. For example in 1971/72, it treated 9005 patients, the average length of stay being 18 days. The average daily bed occupancy was 399 and the peak daily bed occupancy in all departments approached 500.

13. The Department has outpatients clinics in Brisbane in three dispersed locations. The main general clinic and outpatient X-ray facility is accommodated in the Taxation Building, Adelaide Street, City, along with the Department's Queensland Branch office.

The hospital itself has an outpatients clinic. Other services including the psychiatric outpatients department, occupational therapy, physiotherapy and a general rehabilitation centre are operated from the auxiliary hospital "Rosemount" at Windsor.

NEED FOR PROPOSED FACILITIES

14. Future Needs The Committee were told that bed requirements in Repatriation hospitals are expected to continue at a high level for many years. Ex-servicemen of World War II make up the bulk of those eligible for repatriation benefits and as they age there will be an increase in demand for bed accommodation at the hospital. The Department, with the assistance of the Commonwealth Statistician has assessed that there will be a continuing growth in peak daily bed demand to around 800 beds by 1989 after which it will taper off.

15. The hospital, in common with most other Repatriation institutions, was built under wartime conditions to treat wounded and sick servicemen in the younger age group. The need is now to treat an aging group of men and women with a far greater range of medical and surgical needs. Since World War II and particularly in recent years, advances in medical techniques have given rise to a need for changes in the facilities originally provided. Consequently, a comprehensive programme has been determined to replace, modernise and extend facilities where required. In accordance with this overall plan, a detailed master plan for the development of Greenslopes has been prepared. The proposals now outlined are the first of several major projects to be presented to the Committee and are considered by the Department to be the most urgent of its immediate needs.

16. Outpatients Clinic The area occupied by the Branch office and outpatients clinic in the Taxation building is required for other purposes and whilst the Branch office will be accommodated in a new Commonwealth office building, almost completed, the space in this building will not be appropriate for establishment of a major outpatients clinic. Other accommodation must therefore be obtained as soon as practicable.

17. The existing clinic is already inadequate and it has been necessary to use the services and facilities of medical specialists and paramedical practitioners in private consulting rooms and laboratories. With the increasing age of patients and the present emphasis on treatment at the outpatient level, work load at the clinic will continue to expand.

18. The Committee were told that traditionally and desirably, outpatients clinics serving the general community form part of the public hospitals. They function as ancillary services, and care for patients prior to admission, or after discharge and in certain cases provide for those who can be treated satisfactorily as outpatients on a long term basis. Whenever possible the modern trend is to provide treatment at the outpatient level principally to avoid the high cost of inpatient treatment.

19. In 1966, the Department established a major outpatients clinic at R.G.H., Daw Park in South Australia and considers the new facility to be most satisfactory and a substantial improvement over previous arrangements. It is therefore proposed to repeat this arrangement in Brisbane and provide an expanded and consolidated outpatients clinic in the hospital grounds. This will take the form of a single storey wing at the western end of the administration building. The psychiatric outpatients clinic at "Rosemount" hospital will transfer to the new centre at Greenslopes. However, the psychiatric day centre and the associated physiotherapy and occupational and speech therapy services will continue to be based on Rosemount.

20. X-ray Department Because this department is dispersed in two locations it has been necessary to duplicate equipment and provide additional clerical and technical staff. The present accommodation of 900 square feet at the main clinic in the Taxation building and 3,000 square feet in the hospital is now considered to be inadequate. It has already been necessary to refer patients to consultant radiologists and work a regular overtime programme within the department.

21. It is considered desirable on economic and efficiency grounds that X-ray services be carried out in the one location, at the hospital, and extensions and alterations to provide an additional 4,000 square feet in the administration building are proposed.

22. Pathology Department The hospital's pathology facilities occupy 4,800 square feet of which 2,000 square feet, for the bacteriology section, is in temporary substandard accommodation. Overall the accommodation is so inadequate and overcrowded that equipment and records are stored in corridors and offices. This overcrowding and the dispersed nature of the accommodation results in considerable inefficiency. The Department estimates that a total area of 17,300 square feet is required to bring the accommodation up to an acceptable standard and cater for expected growth.

23. Pharmacy The pharmacy occupies 650 square feet in the main outpatients clinic in the Taxation building and 1,670 square feet in the hospital. In addition to requiring space at the hospital for the facilities to be relocated from the Taxation building, additional space is required to relieve present overcrowding. Currently some storage facilities are being used in remote areas of the hospital with resultant inconvenience. It is proposed to provide a further 2,400 square feet of space at ground level at the rear of the administration building adjoining the existing pharmacy.

24. Admission and Discharge Centre The present accommodation for this facility is overcrowded because the available space is shared with outpatient facilities. A total area of 3,000 square feet is required.

25. Hospital Administration The existing accommodation of 4,000 square feet is inadequate for administration functions and the area now occupied is required for expansion of outpatient facilities. An area of 5,000 square feet of space is required for offices for senior staff, personnel administration, file storage etc.

26. To provide the additional space required for these purposes it is proposed to construct a three level extension at the rear of the administration building extending over the sunken service road and the service core of wards 3 and 4. The work will include alterations and reorganisation of space within the building.

27. Committee's Conclusion Since their construction, the Department's hospitals have fulfilled a special medical function alongside general community services and under present Government policy, will continue in this role for many years to come. Not only, therefore, will there be a continuing demand for bed accommodation, but as patients age and their medical requirements become more complex, there is expected to be an increasing demand on support medical and paramedical services.

28. In view of the modern emphasis on treatment at outpatient level, outpatients clinics particularly will require expansion to keep up with demands. As the present facilities are already inadequate and dispersed, and a major portion of existing accommodation is required for other purposes, the Committee agree that there is a need to establish a new expanded outpatients clinic to cater for present and future needs.

8.

As the location of facilities in the one building in the hospital complex will enable an improved service to be given to patients with more effective and economic use of expensive equipment and highly trained staff, the Committee concluded that the proposal to erect an outpatients wing on to the administrative building is appropriate.

29. At the site inspection, it was evident that departments working in the administration building are operating under crowded conditions. Conditions will worsen unless expanded facilities are provided.

30. The Committee therefore agree that there is a need for the proposed alterations and extensions.

THE BUILDING PROPOSAL

31. Planning Outline The work in the reference comprises ground floor alterations, a two level extension to the rear of the administration building and a single storey outpatients wing to the west. The work will provide an additional 55,000 square feet of accommodation.

32. Outpatients Wing The outpatients wing will contain medical and surgical suites, psychiatric, ear, nose and throat, eye, chest and dental clinics and supporting functions including reception area, linen stores, plaster rooms, staff and patients' toilets, medical officers' common room and a Red Cross tea and snack bar.

33. Ground Floor Alterations Within the building, alterations totalling 4,500 square feet are proposed to the pharmacy, admission and discharge and administration areas. The ground floor will then accommodate a short stay ward, endoscopy rooms, medical and administration rooms, a library, clinic offices and staff rooms, medical records, the pharmacy, a pathology collection area and an admission and discharge centre.

34. First Floor Level The first floor level extensions to the rear of the building will provide 5,000 square feet for the hospital administration, relocated from the ground floor, and an area of 8,000 square feet for the expanded X-ray department.

35. Second Floor Level The second floor level will provide 17,300 square feet for the enlarged pathology department.

36. Plant Level A small extension will be made to the third floor level to accommodate plant items.

37. Committee's Conclusion The Committee concluded that the proposed work is appropriate to the need.

CONSTRUCTION

38. Structure The single storey outpatients wing and the other extensions will be constructed of reinforced concrete frames and floors on bored pier and beam foundations. External walls will be of face brick work selected to match the existing building. Window frames will be of aluminium and roofs will be of profiled metal decking on steel frames.

39. Internal Finishes Wall treatment will be of hard plaster, plaster board, barium plaster, welded sheet vinyl or ceramic tiles depending on location. Ceilings will be of off-form concrete with suspended fibrous plaster or acoustic tiles. Floor treatment will be generally of welded sheet vinyl with carpeting and ceramic tiling in special locations. Normal standard hospital fittings will be provided as required. Items of furniture and fittings not built-in and equipment will be supplied separately by the hospital administration.

40. Mechanical Services The new wing and the extensions housing the administrative, X-ray and pathology areas will be air conditioned.

Toilet areas will be mechanically ventilated. Hot water supply will be provided from an extension of the existing steam service. Other services and equipment to be provided include autoclaves, cold rooms, fume cupboards, exhaust fans, distilled water, and compressed air and gas supply.

41. Electrical Services A new substation and main switchboard will be installed, replacing the existing units, to serve the administration building and the new outpatient wing. Fluorescent lighting to be installed throughout the building will comply with the lighting code of the Standards Association of Australia. Fixed equipment will be direct wired but general purpose power outlets will be provided throughout the building. Special outlets will be provided for X-ray equipment, autoclaves and sterilizers. A nurses call system and a piped music system for waiting areas will be provided. Block telephone cabling, distribution boards and ducting will be installed for later installation of equipment and handsets. A file lift will be provided in the pathology department for the handling of specimens.

42. Fire Protection The second floor laboratory areas and the basement plant room will be protected by an automatic sprinkler system and the remaining areas by a thermal fire alarm system. Fire alarm circuits will be connected to the existing indicator board. Portable fire extinguishers and hose reels will be installed at appropriate points in the building and external hydrants will be provided.

43. Hydraulic Services Sewerage and water supply lines which cross the site will be removed and new services will be provided and connected to existing reticulation systems.

44. Roads and Parking The access road to the administration building will be extended to Denman Street. The car park forming part of this road will also be extended. Pavements will be bitumen surfaced and provided with kerbs and gutters.

45. Committee's Recommendation The Committee recommend the construction of the work in the reference.

ESTIMATE OF COST

46. The estimated cost of the work when referred to the Committee was \$1.7 million made up as follows:

	\$
Building works	1,039,000
Mechanical services	465,000
Electrical services	83,000
Fire Protection	41,000
Siteworks and external services	72,000
	\$1,700,000

PROGRAMME

47. It is expected that after an approval to proceed is given the preparation of final drawings and tender documents, invitation and analysis of tenders and acceptance of a contract will take 10 months. Construction is estimated to take 18 months after a contract is let.

OTHER OBSERVATIONS

48. In concluding that there is a need for the work in the reference and that the design proposed is a reasonable expression of that need, the Committee had regard to the state of the existing services and the likely future demand for treatment services under present Government policies. We were however aware that a Standing Committee of the Senate and an independent authority are conducting wide ranging enquiries into repatriation services.

Ideally we would have preferred to conduct our investigation in the light of the findings of the other enquiries but because of the nature of the proposed work and the urgent need for it we concede that it is proper for it to proceed as soon as possible.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

49. The summary of recommendations and conclusions of the Committee is set out below. Alongside each is shown the paragraph in the report to which it refers.

Paragraph

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|----|---|----|
| 1. | THERE IS A NEED TO ESTABLISH A NEW EXPANDED OUTPATIENTS CLINIC TO CATER FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE NEEDS. | 28 |
| 2. | THE PROPOSAL TO ERECT AN OUTPATIENTS WING ON TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING IS APPROPRIATE. | 28 |
| 3. | THERE IS A NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ALTERATIONS AND EXTENSIONS. | 30 |
| 4. | THE PROPOSED WORK IS APPROPRIATE TO THE NEED. | 37 |
| 5. | THE COMMITTEE RECOMMEND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE WORK IN THE REFERENCE. | 45 |
| 6. | THE ESTIMATED COST OF THE WORK WHEN REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE WAS \$1.7 MILLION. | 46 |

G.R. Kelly
(G.R. KELLY)
Chairman.

Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works,
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19 October 1972.