

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA  
*1975—Parliamentary Paper No. 299*

*Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works*

## REPORT

relating to the proposed construction of a

# MULTI-STOREY WARD BLOCK

at

Repatriation General Hospital,  
Greenslopes, Queensland

(TWELFTH REPORT OF 1975)

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*Presented pursuant to Statute and  
ordered to be printed 29 October 1975*

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MEMBERS OF THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS  
(TWENTY-THIRD COMMITTEE)

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EXTRACT FROM

THE VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
No. 96 DATED 11 SEPTEMBER 1975.

14 PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE—REFERENCE OF WORK—REPATRIATION GENERAL HOSPITAL, GREENSLOPES, QLD—MULTI-STORY WARD BLOCK: Mr Riordan (Minister for Housing and Construction) moved, pursuant to notice—That, in accordance with the provisions of the *Public Works Committee Act 1969-1974*, the following proposed work be referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works for investigation and report: Construction of a proposed multi-storey ward block, Repatriation General Hospital, Greenslopes, Qld.

Mr Riordan presented plans in connection with the proposed work.

Debate ensued.

Question—put and passed.

## CONTENTS

	Paragraph
The Reference . . . . .	1
The Committee's Investigation . . . . .	4
The Need	
Departmental planning . . . . .	6
Future needs . . . . .	7
Repatriation General Hospital, Greenslopes . . . . .	8
Ward areas . . . . .	11
Associated facilities . . . . .	13
Committee's conclusion . . . . .	14
The Proposal	
Site . . . . .	15
Committee's conclusion . . . . .	16
Outline of proposal . . . . .	17
Ward block . . . . .	19
Staff facilities . . . . .	21
Kitchen . . . . .	23
Dining room . . . . .	24
Future development . . . . .	25
Construction	
Structure . . . . .	26
External finishes . . . . .	27
Internal finishes . . . . .	28
Air conditioning . . . . .	29
Mechanical ventilation and relief cooling . . . . .	30
Central energy plant . . . . .	31
Piped medical gas system . . . . .	32
Food services . . . . .	33
Laundry service . . . . .	34
Electrical services . . . . .	35
Lifts . . . . .	36
Roads and car parks . . . . .	37
Water supply and sewerage . . . . .	38
Fire protection . . . . .	39
Landscaping . . . . .	40
Committee's conclusion . . . . .	41
Environmental Impact . . . . .	42
Estimate of Cost . . . . .	43
Program . . . . .	44
Other Observations . . . . .	45
Recommendations and Conclusions . . . . .	46
Perspective—R.G.H. Greenslopes New Multi-Storey Ward Block	

## WITNESSES

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# Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works

## MULTI-STOREY WARD BLOCK, REPATRIATION GENERAL HOSPITAL, GREENSLOPES, QUEENSLAND

### REPORT

By resolution on 11 September 1975, the House of Representatives referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works for investigation and report to the Parliament, the proposal to construct a multi-storey ward block at the Repatriation General Hospital, Greenslopes, Queensland.

The Committee have the honour to report as follows:

#### THE REFERENCE

1. The proposal submitted to the Committee is for the construction of a six-storey air conditioned, multi-ward block designed to accommodate 288 beds, kitchen and dining facilities, library, duty medical officers common rooms, convention room, staff change room and amenities room, storage room and plant room. The building will be of reinforced concrete frame with aluminium window walls designed to harmonise with the surrounding development.

2. The building has been designed with an east-west axis to avoid the undesirable effects of the western sun.

3. The estimated cost of the proposal when referred to the Committee was \$11.5m. The estimated cost at the time of the Committee's hearing was \$12.3m.

#### THE COMMITTEE'S INVESTIGATION

4. The Committee received written submissions and drawings from the Departments of Repatriation and Compensation and Housing and Construction and took evidence from their representatives at a public hearing in Brisbane on 13 October 1975. Prior to the hearing the Committee inspected the existing facilities which will be demolished and replaced by the proposed work.

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

#### THE NEED

6. *Departmental Planning.* The Department's hospitals were originally built for the Army under wartime conditions to meet the needs of wounded and sick servicemen in the younger age groups. Today the principal need is to treat ageing groups of men and women with a different range of medical and surgical needs. There have also been major developments since the war, especially in recent years, in medical techniques which have emphasised the need for changes in facilities originally provided. For these reasons, a comprehensive program has been implemented in recent years to replace, modernise and extend facilities, where necessary, in all Repatriation hospitals. This is being undertaken progressively on the basis of a five-year forward plan which is continually updated, aiming to ensure that the Department's hospitals are equipped adequately to meet present day treatment requirements. The present project is included in the Department's overall planning.

7. *Future needs.* The Department's statistical forecast of future bed requirements made in conjunction with the Australian Government Statistician, is updated regularly in the light of actual demand. It is expected that bed requirements for veterans in Repatriation hospitals will continue at a high level for many years. As the Second War ex-servicemen age, and they represent the bulk of those eligible, it is expected that there will be an increase in the demand for bed accommodation in the Department's hospitals.

8. *Repatriation General Hospital, Greenslopes.* The hospital was erected during 1941-42 for the Department of the Army for the treatment of members of the armed forces and was known as the '112th Australian General Hospital'. The hospital was taken over by the Department of Repatriation in April 1947.

9. The hospital consists of a multi-storey administration block and a pavilion ward section containing 19 wards. There are quarters for medical officers and nurses and ancillary buildings

housing the laundry and special treatment facilities. It has a capacity of 535 beds and provides the full range of services of a large general hospital.

10. Statistics of in-patient treatment for the financial year 1974-1975 are as follows:

Treatment Category	In-patient first day of period	Admissions during period	Total patients treated	Average length of stay (days)	Average daily beds occupied	Peak bed occupancy
General Medical	237	4 596	4 833	15.0	189	230
Surgical	180	4 537	4 717	13.7	170	212
Tuberculosis	6	22	28	81.0	5	17
Psychiatric	31	769	800	18.7	39	58
Nursing Care	—	1	1	5.0	—	—
Total	454	9 925	10 379	14.8	403	488*
Males	387	8 368	8 755	15.0	343	
Females	67	1 557	1 624	14.2	60	

\* The peak occupancy figures for all of the categories did not necessarily occur at the same time and therefore cannot be added to give a 'Total' figure. The total figure given is the highest overall occupancy achieved on any one day, although the hospital has a capacity of 535 beds. This total capacity is limited by medical categories of patients.

11. *Ward areas.* The hospital is over thirty years old and was designed for patients of a different age group suffering from different disabilities from those who are now being treated there. The ward buildings have remained basically unaltered externally and internally since the original takeover from the Department of Army in 1947.

12. The present ward accommodation is outmoded and substandard and replacement is necessary to meet changing treatment needs and to take account of developments in medicine. The ward design is unsatisfactory from the aspect of nursing care, in that only limited patient supervision can be maintained. Existing ventilation is unsatisfactory for the climatic conditions and makes habitation of the wards uncomfortable and nursing difficult.

13. *Associated Facilities.* Evidence was given to the Committee that in addition to the need for a new ward block, a need also exists for the improvement of certain associated facilities including staff amenities, kitchen and dining room, etc. Staff amenities and facilities are minimal and not conveniently situated to work areas. The existing kitchen was erected in 1945 and has reached the end of its economic life. At present, three separate dining rooms are operating resulting in multiplicity of staff and equipment. It is proposed to overcome this situation by providing a single dining area.

14. *Committee's Conclusion.* There is a need for a new ward block at Repatriation General Hospital, Greenslopes to replace outmoded and substandard ward accommodation and associated facilities.

## THE PROPOSAL

15. *Site.* The hospital is situated approximately 5km from Brisbane in the suburb of Greenslopes on the slope of Mt Stephens, with a good view of a broad area of Brisbane. The total site area is approximately 11 hectares. Eleven existing timber buildings will be demolished to allow construction of the work proposed in this reference.

16. *Committee's conclusion.* The new ward block should be located on the site presently occupied by eleven timber buildings.

17. *Outline of proposal.* The work in this reference including the boiler house comprises a total area of 17 750m<sup>2</sup> and is made up of:

Lower Ground Floor—By excavation an area of 2750m<sup>2</sup> will be made available to accommodate a plant room, stores handling space, staff sign-on facilities and change rooms, staff amenities room and lift.

Ground Floor—On this level an area of 2750m<sup>2</sup> will be provided to locate a kitchen and office area for food services, dining area, conference room, medical officers lounge, living out male and female medical officers change rooms, duty medical officers rooms, medical library, canteen, hairdressing salon, bank and post office.

Floors 1 to 4—Each floor will be 2750m<sup>2</sup> in area and will consist of a 72-bed ward com-

prising two 30-bed sections and a 12-bed high-dependency section.

18. Major components of the proposal are outlined below.

19. *Ward block.* It is proposed to demolish eleven old timber buildings used to accommodate wards 10, 11, 12 and 13, staff mess, canteen, an occupational therapy area and temporary microbiology facilities. On this site it is proposed to construct a six-storey building of which floors 1 to 4 will consist of ward accommodation, totalling 288 beds, with 72 beds on each floor. This will increase total bed capacity from 535 to 544. The net increase of 9 beds is required to meet current hospital commitments and provide back-up for a proposed emergency accident centre. The Committee were assured that satisfactory arrangements will be made to accommodate patients during the construction period.

20. The division of the patient bed areas into single and four-bed rooms with toilet and ablutions facilities attached will provide an improved level of amenity and greater flexibility in use between different specialties resulting in better bed utilisation.

21. *Staff facilities.* Sign-on and change room facilities and an amenities room will be provided on the lower ground floor and will replace sub-standard accommodation presently provided in a number of locations within the hospital. The new facilities will be centrally located to staff work areas and the dining room.

22. An area of approximately 300m<sup>2</sup> will be provided on the ground floor for lounge and change room facilities for medical officers and will include adequate provision for female officers. The existing facilities are inadequate for the number of medical staff now employed and do not provide accommodation for female duty medical officers who use facilities in the nurses' quarters.

23. *Kitchen.* It is proposed to construct a new kitchen of 950m<sup>2</sup> on the western end of the ground floor to replace the existing kitchen which was built in 1945 and has reached the end of its economic life and is remote from all patient and dining areas. The kitchen will operate on the basis of fresh or frozen foods being prepared and cooked in a conventional manner, as close as possible to the time of use. In this way, the highest quality food is produced.

24. *Dining room.* It is proposed to provide a single unsegregated dining room of approximately 390m<sup>2</sup> adjacent to the kitchen to replace the present three completely separate dining rooms.

Such a single facility will reduce staffing requirements and provide an economical method of food distribution.

25. *Future development.* Although no other projects of a major nature are proposed for the hospital in the immediate future, planning allows for the future construction of a similar ward block next to the work proposed in this reference. This second ward block would replace other wards as they become outdated and include new operating theatres, intensive care ward, emergency accident centre and central sterilising departments.

## CONSTRUCTION

26. *Structure.* The building will be of reinforced concrete frame with aluminium window walls. Floors will be reinforced concrete and the plant room will be constructed of steel framing and covered by coloured metal deck. It will be necessary to design a pile foundation for this structure.

27. *External finishes.* The multi-storey building will be finished with aluminium window walls and fixed insulated panels and precast concrete hoods. Window frames will be aluminium. The sheeting of the plant room and fascia will be coloured metal deck and the concrete roof will be covered with a cellular concrete screed and waterproof membrane, and topped with asbestos cement tiles.

28. *Internal finishes.* Internal partitions will be brick finished in hard plaster, ceramic tiles, vinyl tiles, aluminium sheeted board and face brickwork. Toilet partitions will be terrazzo. Floors will be finished with vinyl tiles, carpet, ceramic tiles or granolithic. Ceilings will be acoustic tiles or plaster board.

29. *Air conditioning.* Air conditioning designed to meet the appropriate medical and comfort requirements of the hospital authority will be provided throughout all normally occupied areas of the new building. Air conditioning systems will be of conventional design and will be serviced by chilled water and steam reticulated from the central boiler-chiller house.

30. *Mechanical ventilation and relief cooling.* Ancillary service areas including toilets, utility rooms, service areas and the like will be exhaust ventilated. The kitchen and other areas with high equipment heat loads will be served by plant designed to provide relief cooling for staff comfort.

31. *Central energy plant.* The existing coal fired steam boiler plant has sufficient capacity to service this proposal. A modification of the services building will accommodate water chilling plant, emergency power generators and air com-

pressors. Domestic hot water and heating water will be provided from steam heated calorifiers located in the new ward block. Reticulation of these services from the services building to the ward block will be through an underground service tunnel.

32. *Piped medical gas system.* Medical air, oxygen and vacuum services will be provided in all wards with outlets sited to suit the needs of the area served.

33. *Food services.* Meals will be distributed to all wards in the hospital from the central kitchen on the ground floor using a central plated tray system. The dining room adjacent to the kitchen will be to provide hot meals and snacks to the staff, patients and the public.

34. *Laundry service.* The existing hospital laundry will provide a linen service to the new block.

35. *Electrical services.* Power will be provided by an extension of the existing reticulation system and the installation of an additional substation. Lighting and general purpose power will be provided in accordance with normal departmental standards and the relevant Australian standards. Telephones, patient to nurse call system and a pocket paging system are also included in this proposal.

36. *Lifts.* Three bed/passenger lifts will be provided to serve the lower ground, ground, first to fourth floors for the transport of patients and passengers. Two food lifts will be provided to serve the lower ground, ground and first to fourth floors for the transport of food trolleys.

37. *Roads and Car Parks.* Roads of the same construction as existing, will be provided within the hospital system to various entrances to the building. Car parking facilities will be provided for 40 extra cars within the hospital complex. New roads and car parking area will have concrete kerbs and channels.

38. *Water Supply and Sewerage.* The multi-storey ward block will be connected to the external water supply and sewerage systems.

39. *Fire Protection.* In accordance with departmental standards for hospitals, there will be an automatic fire detection system throughout and automatic sprinklers in the more hazardous areas of the lower ground and ground floors. Portable fire extinguishers and hoses will be installed.

40. *Landscaping.* Areas adjacent to the multi-storey building and car parking area will be landscaped to integrate into the existing hospital landscaping.

41. *Committee's Conclusion.* The Committee recommend the construction of the work in this reference.

## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

42. The Department of Repatriation and Compensation was advised by the Department of the Environment that it was not necessary to prepare an environmental impact statement for this project. Care has been taken in design to ensure that the outward appearance of the new ward block will blend with existing hospital buildings.

## ESTIMATE OF COST

43. The estimated cost of the work when referred to the Committee was \$11.5m. At the time of the Committee's hearing the estimated cost was \$12.3m made up as follows:

	\$
Building works . . . . .	6 165 000
Structural works . . . . .	1 550 000
Mechanical services . . . . .	2 754 000
Electrical services . . . . .	1 021 000
Fire sprinklers . . . . .	74 000
Site works and tunnel . . . . .	689 000
Hydraulic services . . . . .	21 000
Furniture and fittings . . . . .	26 000
 Total . . . . .	 12 300 000

## PROGRAM

44. It is estimated that the preparation of contract documents, calling and analysing tenders will take approximately twelve months. Following acceptance of a contract, construction will take 130 weeks.

## OTHER OBSERVATIONS

45. The Committee note that office space of approximately 55m<sup>2</sup> is to be made available in the proposed new building to the Australian Postal Commission and the Bank of New South Wales and suggest that consideration be given to rent being charged for the use of such space.

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

46. 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

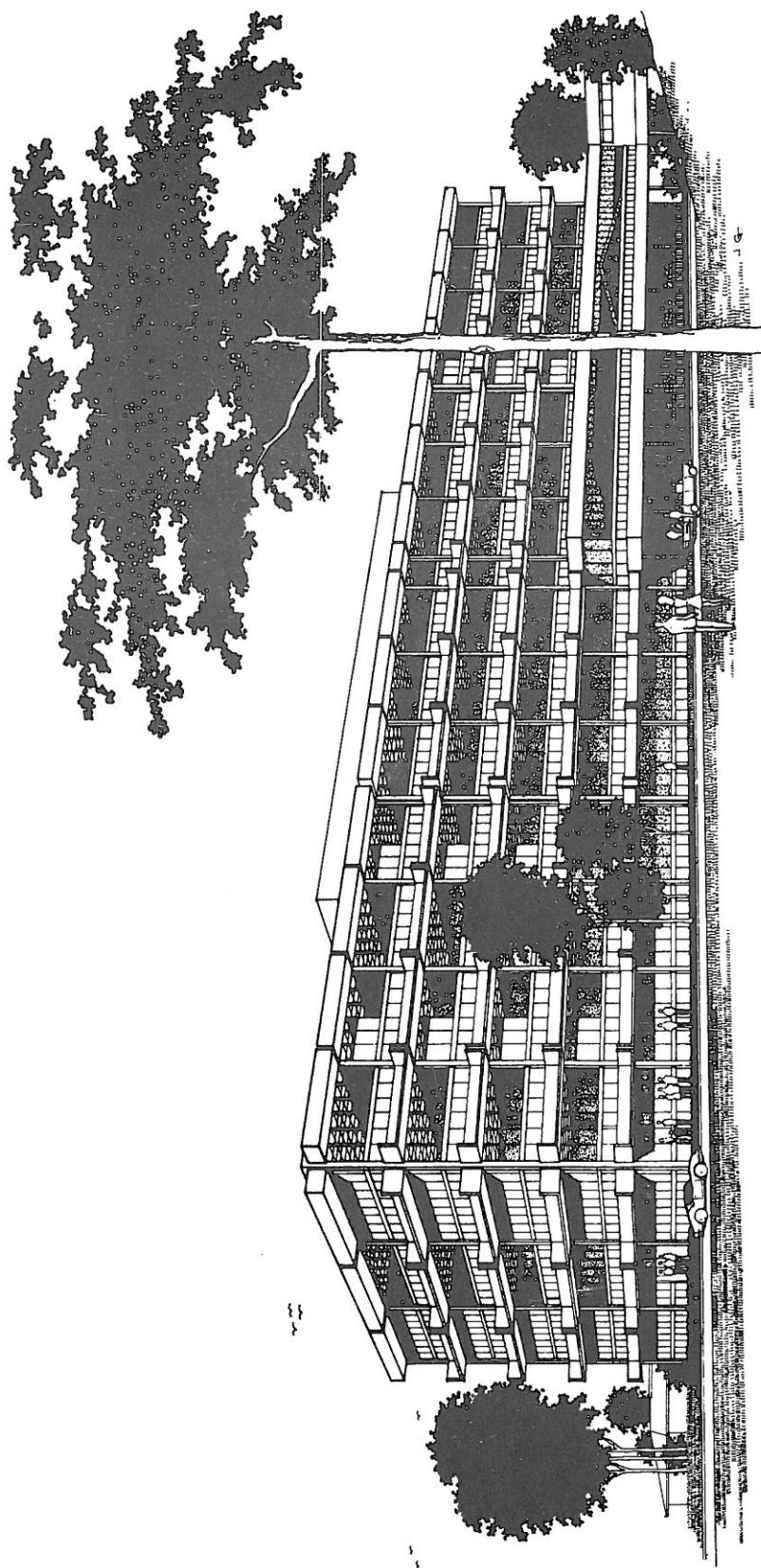
1. There is a need for a new ward block at the Repatriation General Hospital, Greenslopes to replace outmoded and

substandard ward accommodation and associated facilities . . . . .	14
2. The new ward block should be located on the site presently occupied by eleven timber buildings . . . . .	16
3. The Committee recommend the con- struction of the work proposed in this reference . . . . .	41
4. The estimated cost of the work when referred to the Committee was \$11.5m.	

At the time of the Committee's hearing  
the estimated cost was \$12.3m . . . . 43

L. K. JOHNSON  
Chairman

Parliamentary Standing Committee  
on Public Works  
Parliament House  
Canberra, A.C.T. 2600  
16 October 1975



**PERSPECTIVE**

**R.G.H. GREENSLOPES NEW MULTI-STORY WARD BLOCK**