

## **Question on Notice**

**No. 900**

**Asked on 20 August 2024**

**MR L MILLAR** ASKED MINISTER FOR HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH AND AMBULANCE SERVICES AND MINISTER FOR WOMEN (HON S FENTIMAN)—

### **QUESTION**

Will the Minister advise why a decision has been taken to demolish a functional building – the old Blackwater Hospital – when it would be well-suited to fulfilling a genuine community need for facilities to provide access to respite care, senior citizens day programs, crisis care, aged care and outpatient services?

### **ANSWER**

The new Blackwater Multipurpose Health Service is part of the \$1 billion Building Rural and Remote Health Program to replace aged health infrastructure across rural and remote Queensland, providing contemporary and fit for purpose infrastructure to address aged and costly to maintain remote health infrastructure, which also supports the attraction and retention of staff.

Due to the age, types of material and configuration of the current Blackwater Multipurpose Health Service it is not safe to move offsite or repurpose for the community. In particular, the structure of the building contains a significant quantity of asbestos. I am advised this poses no risk to community members as the material is not exposed, but that any upgrade or refurbishment of the building would require the removal of all contaminated material.

For this and other reasons, the existing Multipurpose Health Service has been identified as ageing and no longer fit for its intended purpose. This recognition was a key factor in the early stages of the Building Rural and Remote Health Program and the decision to secure funding for a new facility. A replacement will ensure that Queensland Health can provide modern, high-quality services that meet the current standards and requirements of the community.

The new facility will include a 24/7 Emergency Department with six treatment spaces (four more than the current facility) and a triage room, an inpatient ward, six residential aged care beds (two more than the current facility), medical imaging services, outpatient services, dental services, additional consultation rooms and two more Residential Aged Care rooms.

I am excited about the opportunities this new facility will bring and remain committed to engaging in ongoing conversation with the community and staff to ensure the best possible outcomes for everyone involved.