

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

WRITTEN QUESTION

Mrs Lambley to the Minister for Health:

Imanpa Health Clinic

- 1. Why was the Imanpa Health Clinic closed in October 2017?**
The Imanpa Health Centre was temporarily closed on 3 October 2017 to undertake urgent infrastructure upgrades including electrical and plumbing repairs, storage upgrade and pest control that had been identified through Work Health and Safety inspection.

The clinic closure coincided with a staffing issue where the two agency staff were not available to extend their contracts and there were no replacement staff who could immediately provide the mandatory two nurse service required.
- 2. When was the decision made to close the Imanpa Health Clinic?**
The decision to temporarily close the Health Centre was made by 22 September 2017.
- 3. Who was involved in making this decision?**
The decision was taken by Central Australia Health Service management based on the Work Health and Safety Review report; and after all attempts to secure replacement staffing were exhausted.
- 4. When will the Imanpa Health Clinic be re-opened?**
The Imanpa Health Centre was re-opened with full services on 13 October 2017. All building repairs were undertaken and nursing staff were recruited.
- 5. How many people use or access the Imanpa Health Clinic?**
The number of residents who reside at Imanpa is approximately 98 with up to 40 visitors from time to time.
- 6. Where will these people go to access health services while the Imanpa Health Clinic is closed?**
During the short closure the residents were provided with a twice weekly visiting service from Yulara Health Centre supported by an emergency service.
- 7. Why was the CAHS unable to staff the clinic?**
Central Australia Health Service works actively to recruit nursing staff for primary health care services, however is still reliant on agency locum staff to fill positions. The NT Government has a policy of providing a minimum of two nurses in each Health Centre to ensure staff safety and

to ensure that staff have adequate rest relief. These positions are supported by other staff such as Aboriginal Health Practitioners and community members who provide second responder support for all callouts.

The two agency staff who were engaged to provide services at Imanpa determined to not extend their contracts and there were no other staff available who could be deployed to the community at that particular time.

With a number of outstanding significant building repairs on the health centre that needed to be undertaken, it was determined that these needed to be expedited whilst recruitment attempts were vigorously pursued.

8. Exactly what work is currently being done on the building of the Imanpa Health Clinic?

Electrical repairs and pest control throughout the Health Centre and repairs to the sewerage system and drains needed to be undertaken as identified through Work Health and Safety inspections.

9. What plans were made to continue to provide a health service at Imanpa while this work was being done?

A twice weekly visiting service from Yulara, together with emergency call services was implemented during the short closure.

10. Closing a clinic is very unusual - why was this extreme decision made?

The decision was primarily predicated on the Work Health and Safety issues that the Health Centre posed to both staff and patients until the electrical and plumbing repairs were completed.

11. When will the new Imanpa Health Clinic commence construction?

The replacement of the Imanpa Health Centre will be considered as part of the NT Health Strategic Infrastructure Plan.

12. What work has been done to commence building of the new Imanpa Health Clinic?

The replacement of the Health Centre at Imanpa will be considered as part of the NT Health Strategic Infrastructure Plan.

13. What consultation was done with residents of Imanpa and the surrounding areas before the Clinic was closed?

The decision to close the Health Centre arose as an urgent issue, following a site inspection of the health centre and the advice that both agency staff determined to not extend their contracts.

Central Australia Health Service management conducted a community meeting to advise that services would be provided as a twice weekly service from Yulara.

14. Will other NT remote health clinics be closed? If so, which clinics?

There are no plans to close Health Centres in the Central Australia Health Service region.

In order to ensure that Central Australia Health Service maintains the minimum of two nurse health services at all times, there may be periods where staffing resources need to be deployed from other sites to ensure adequate services are maintained in the region.

15. Is the reason for closing NT remote Health Clinic to save money?

There are no savings strategies associated with the closure of Health Centres.

16. Is closing the Imanpa Clinic a budget savings or savings dividend that was required by the NT Treasurer in the 2017/18 budget?

No.
