



Media Release

Senator Mathias Cormann

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Health Administration

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REINSTATE FUNDING FOR CHILDREN'S WARD: SENATE

The Rudd government has come under fire in the Senate for axing funding for vital children's health services in the Peel region – one of the fastest growing urban centres in Australia.

The Peel region community had raised \$2.4 million through raffles, fundraising and community events for a new paediatric ward at the Peel Health Campus, but were relying on a \$502,700 commitment from the Commonwealth.

The funding had been committed by the Howard government, but has been axed by the Rudd government, despite the WA government backing the \$3.8 million project with \$750,000.

The Senate has attacked the Rudd government's actions with the Greens supporting a motion by WA Senator Mathias Cormann calling for the Commonwealth to immediately reinstate the funding.

"Passing this motion, the Senate has sent a very clear message to the Rudd Labor Government – stop looking for excuses to avoid fulfilling this important commitment," Senator Cormann said.

"The Senate today expressed its support for this new paediatric ward at Peel Health Campus, to provide children in the Peel region with more appropriate access to local hospital care," he said.

"The Government should stop using bureaucratic traps in an attempt to catch out a hard working community based organisation focused on a critical local need and start working with them.

"The decision to withdraw these vital funds and abandon the Peel community was cruel, mean-spirited and incredibly short-sighted.

"The local Labor MP Gary Gray is the Parliamentary Secretary with direct portfolio responsibility for the federal funding arrangements for this project. He's gone missing in action.

"He should stop hiding behind his bureaucrats and start fighting for a fair go for the Peel community.

"He should direct his Department today to start working more constructively and cooperatively with the not-for-profit Peel Health Campus Foundation and immediately resolve any outstanding issues.

"Let's stop this mean-spirited carry-on and let's commit to work together for better health services for the children in the Peel region," Senator Cormann said.

(Motion attached)

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