



# Revamp dumped

BY HAMISH HASTIE

Future health services at Bentley hospital took a hit while public transport in Victoria Park received a boost when the State Government released its 2013-14 budget last week.

An additional \$2.2 billion for hospital services over the next four years was allocated but \$5 million for a new development at Bentley Hospital had been removed.

Member for Victoria Park and shadow Treasurer Ben Wyatt criticised the cut to funding.

Mr Wyatt said Minister for Health Kim Hames had previously admitted that the facilities at Bentley Hospital were run down and needed 'tarting up'.

"It's just an extraordinary betrayal of what the Government has been saying is going to happen in Bentley for some time," he said.

"Many of my constituents receive treatment at Bentley hospital and want to continue to be able to visit their local hospital.

"We also have many new families moving into the area because of the proximity to health ser-

vices.

"The Government has been withdrawing health services from the south east corridor of Perth for a number of years.

"This decision has shown that the Government does not have any concern for providing quality public health care in our local community."

Minister for Health Kim Hames said the funding for Bentley hospital had been moved outside forward estimates whilst a conditional audit was undertaken.

"This audit will inform the required infrastructure priorities for the site and will enable a master plan and business case for future service delivery to be prepared," he said.

At the budget announcement Treasurer Troy Buswell also revealed \$5 million would be used to commence works on the Metro Area Express (MAX) light rail project.

The project would see Victoria Park connected to a light rail network reaching west to Nedlands and north to Mirrabooka.

Construction was expected to start in 2016, a year later than promised prior to the state elec-

tion in March.

Curtin University Sustainability Policy Institute transport researcher Jemma Green congratulated the Government on its commitment to public transport but said the detail raised questions about the importance of rail versus road.

"The committed money over the next four years is \$600 million on the two rail projects and \$1.2 billion on the roads," she said.

"Maybe this represents the stage the projects are at but we seem to be spending a lot on big roads, more than we are on the two big election issues which were the rail projects."

Town of Victoria Park mayor Trevor Vaughan welcomed the MAX funding.

"Light rail will eventually provide a significant public transport spine throughout the Town which could enhance the town's vibrancy and connection to neighbouring suburbs as well as help expedite development," he said.

The Burswood stadium also received \$101 million from the budget to start the 18-month pre-construction site works.