

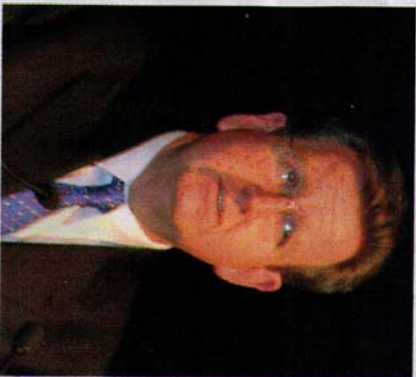
Minister queries respite care funds

Robert Burton-Bradley

Ku-ring-gai MP Barry O'Farrell has accused the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care (DADHC) of running down respite care on the North Shore.

Mr O'Farrell's outrage was sparked by the closure and sale of the John Williams Memorial Hospital at the Rippon Grange site in Wahroonga. DADHC sold the site in 2005 for \$9.8 million to Waterbrook Lifestyle Developments which has since lodged a DA to build 78 units on the site.

"More than a year after the sale, only \$1.5 million of the \$10 million proceeds has been spent, purchasing just two homes which do not appear to be providing the type of respite care and services that were previously offered on the John Williams site at Wahroonga," Mr O'Farrell said. "Regrettably, the Government had



Furious with the State Government:
Ku-ring-gai MP Barry O'Farrell.

clearly rejected any option of seeking to invest in the site, bringing it up to standard and allow it to continue to provide much-needed respite services in this part of Sydney."

A spokesperson for DADHC said

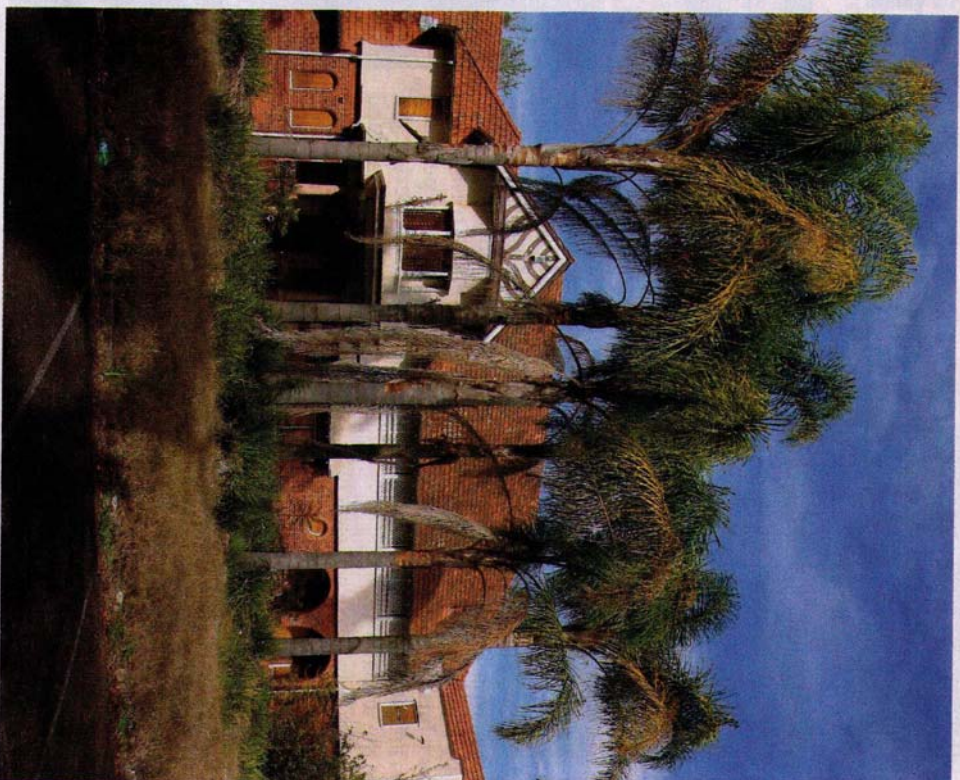
"All funds from the sale of the John Williams Centre will be fully committed to disability services.

"To date, \$1.5 million has been spent on upgrading properties at Thornleigh and Girraween which were purchased by the Department in July," he said.

The department said the DA for the Thornleigh site was only approved in September, and it had taken time to find property replacements.

Mr O'Farrell said the government knew four years ago it needed alternative facilities when it varied the terms of the property trust so it could sell the land.

"Four years should have been plenty of time to plan how the proceeds were to be allocated, to identify the needs of local families and to ensure the proceeds were invested in such services much more quickly".



The John Williams Memorial Hospital has fallen into disrepair.