



Hospital fix-up stalled

■ Kendall O'Connor

Not much progress has been made in upgrading Katanning District Hospital, more than two years after \$35 million in funding was committed to the project.

However, meetings are expected in February to pave a way forward for the infrastructure work.

Shire of Katanning president Alan McFarland said he believed the project still had the green light but he was yet to see anything specific regarding the upgrades.

"I would have thought I would have seen much more than what was happening, in some ways we should be ready to go to start work," he said.

The \$35 million for upgrades to Katanning hospital was an-

nounced by Premier Colin Barnett in July 2011.

The facility was one of six country hospitals flagged for upgrades, with about \$31 million also committed to Northam hospital and \$39.86 million to Narrogin.

Katanning Shire deputy chief executive Andrew Holden said the local government was in the dark about designs of any hospital upgrades as it was not direct stakeholders in the Southern Inland Health Initiative which distributes Royalties for Regions funding to country health.

"From a council perspective we would like to see it get done," he said.

"As a Shire we can advocate as

much as possible but we don't have any control over the time frame with this.

"Health facilities are one of the big issues people consider when moving to Katanning."

In 2011, the State Government announced it would spend \$538 million to boost medial care and facilities in southern rural communities.

WA Country Health Service was contacted for comment but did not respond in time for print.

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