

HOSPITALS — BED CAPACITY

150. Mr D.R. MICHAEL to the Minister for Health:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's unprecedented investment in Western Australia's health system.

- (1) Can the minister outline to the house how the government is building our hospital bed capacity across Western Australia, including additional intensive care unit beds?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house how these additional beds will assist Western Australia's public health system during the state's COVID-19 peak?

Ms A. SANDERSON replied:

I am very pleased to answer the question from the member for Balcatta, and I thank him for that question.

- (1)–(2) I was very pleased to open 24 additional intensive care beds at Royal Perth Hospital on Monday, and they became operational yesterday, Wednesday, with the first patients moving into them. Those 24 beds will add to our overall state capacity and it was around a \$22 million investment. We brought this investment forward so that we could make them COVID-ready to take patients during our surge. Those beds have also been developed to optimise COVID conditions. We have provided additional money to ensure that that there were glass windows and no curtains, which are challenging for infection control; separate rooms; negative and positive pressure rooms; and also bariatric rooms for patients. This takes the total capacity of ICU in Royal Perth Hospital to 48 beds that will be used for COVID patients.

There is also a dedicated simulation training room with a one-way mirror—that is the only one in Western Australia—to allow staff to train in circumstances and be judged by the clinicians on the other side. It is a fantastic facility. It really is state of the art. It will employ around 250 staff members, including 170 nurses and 50 doctors. It brings the total ICU capacity in WA to 150 beds. This is a really, really important part of our preparation for COVID and a part of building our bed capacity across Western Australia.

There are currently 634 group 1 ventilators, of which 271 are located within Western Australian hospitals, with 219 around metropolitan sites and 52 in regional sites. Another 363 ventilators have been centrally procured and are ready for deployment.

I have to make the point that this is the sixth question time since I have become health minister and the second question time that the opposition has not asked me a single question. In the middle of a health pandemic, when we are about to reach one of the most difficult times in Western Australian history and managing the health of the people of our state, that is two out of six days when I have not been asked a question about the pandemic. Instead, the opposition is focused—we saw the focus of the Liberal leader yesterday—on dishing out disrespectful sexist remarks, with a qualified apology; an apology that says, “It’s all a joke. It’s all in the heat of the debate.” That is not an apology. That is an excuse.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please, members!

Ms A. SANDERSON: We know that there is a vacuum of leadership at the top of the Liberal Party. We have seen a vacuum of leadership on this issue from the Leader of the Opposition, who has failed at every point to call out the sexist and misogynistic behaviour of her colleagues. She has failed at every point. I know she knows what entrenched sexism looks like. I know she knows that. The standard you walk past is the standard that you accept, and you have to call it out.

Ms M.J. Davies interjected.

Ms A. SANDERSON: It only matters when we call it out. The standard we walk past is the standard that we accept. It will only stop —

Point of Order

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Madam Speaker, the opposition was actually denied completing our question time yesterday with a supplementary question, because ministers did not stick to the questions that they were being asked, and they were not adhering to your request to keep their answers short. This is happening again, and I would please ask that the minister is directed to sit down and answer, or answer the substance of the question.

The SPEAKER: Firstly, you have not actually raised a point of order. You have raised a point of view about question time yesterday. I do not concur with your point of view. I think that the reasons that question time took so long yesterday were varied, not a single issue. I anticipate today that question time will allow for you to have ample opportunity to ask a further question and to have a supplementary. I would, however, ask that the minister bring her answer to a conclusion.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Ms A. SANDERSON: I will conclude by saying it only matters when we call it out and it only ends when we call it out, just like that runner who stopped when there were three men on the panel judging women, and, on her own, she called it out. I will ask the Leader of the Opposition: will you be brave enough to call it out?