

MAGNETIC RESONANCE IMAGING MACHINE, PRINCESS MARGARET HOSPITAL FOR CHILDREN

858. Mr J.B. D'ORAZIO to the Minister for Health:

Will the minister advise on the progress being made to install a magnetic resonance imaging machine at Princess Margaret Hospital for Children?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Vasse to order for the first time.

Mr R.C. KUCERA replied:

Quite frankly, today was a diamond day. There are not too many of those in the health sector. I sat at the foot of the six-tonne MRI machine at the Princess Margaret Hospital for Children, which machine was lifted into place by crane on Saturday afternoon. Alongside me was a lovely little eight-year-old girl called Melissa. I was advised that Melissa had to attend Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital four times in the past month for MRI. She has had to be anaesthetised on each occasion. I do not resile from the fact that the Government has waged an ongoing fight with the federal Government for the licensing of that machine. Like any other health minister, there are days when I realise that the job is worth it, and today was one, especially when Melissa put her arm on my shoulder. I was told that a photograph was needed.

Several members interjected.

Mr R.C. KUCERA: Any members with children will understand what I am saying. Melissa put her arm around my shoulder, looked across at her mother and said, "But I still love my dad, mum." It made it all worthwhile. The Government spent \$3.2 million of Western Australian taxpayers' money to put that machine into Princess Margaret Hospital for Children. I am very proud to have seen that machine put in place. I am not proud of the grubby little backroom deals that those on the other side of the House did to deny that machine to the children of this State. I will never be proud of that. At the end of the day the State's children come first and will always come first. The fight is not over. Only this week -

Mr P.D. Omodei: You should have done it two and a half years ago.

Mr R.C. KUCERA: The Opposition should have done it eight years ago. The member need not talk about that. Children were suffering in this State for eight years.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr R.C. KUCERA: This week I received yet another letter from the federal Minister for Health and Ageing in which she wrote -

For this reason, I have had to defer consideration of MEG advice pending discussions with the radiology profession on how MRI might be incorporated in future . . .

What a lot of gobbledegook. The minister is essentially saying that yet again she has deferred the licensing of a machine, for not only Princess Margaret Hospital for Children but also Fremantle Hospital. So far private health sector licensing in this State, as a result of the scandal that was wrought by the previous Minister for Health, is running at a ratio of four to one.

Several members interjected.

Mr R.C. KUCERA: Members opposite have the gall to laugh when I talk about an eight-year-old cancer patient who for the very first time will get the machine that she deserves. Shame on them!

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Warren-Blackwood and the Leader of the Opposition to order.

Point of Order

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I observed that exchange between the member for Warren-Blackwood and the Minister for Health. Why have you not called the Minister for Health to order, Mr Speaker, because he was taking on the member for Warren-Blackwood?

The SPEAKER: I am happy to answer. It is not a point of order. The member may not have noticed, but the minister was answering a question and there was a disorderly interjection. Does the member understand that? It is simple enough.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I understand it.

Questions without Notice Resumed