

AMBULANCE RAMPING

312. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Minister for Health:

I have a supplementary question. In 2017, the minister characterised 1 030 ramping hours as being a crisis point. How does the minister characterise the catastrophic record this government is setting, which is more than five times the figure that the minister so harshly critiqued back then? How does the minister characterise it?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

It is because this is not 2017! Something has happened since 2017, Leader of the Opposition. It is called a global pandemic.

Dr D.J. Honey interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Cottesloe, you have not asked the question, so I ask you not to interject.

Mr R.H. COOK: There is one born every day, Madam Speaker!

There has been a global pandemic that has changed the way that people are consuming health services. We have had an increase in the volume of presentations, specifically an increase in acuity. That means we have had a significant increase in the number of category 1 patients presenting to our EDs. That has led to a 17 per cent increase in the length of episodes of care in our emergency departments, which is significantly challenging the flow of patients. In addition, we have had a significant increase in the number of mental health patients. As we know—although the member for Cottesloe would not appreciate or even attempt to understand this—as a result of the pandemic, anxiety levels have increased in the community, which has increased the number of presentations of mental health patients. I thought members opposite would be a bit more sensitive about these issues. The government will stand by patients and make sure that we get more resources in play. We will increase services and we will make sure that our great doctors and nurses working on the front line will have the resources they need to provide the world-class health care that Western Australians expect and deserve.