

KING EDWARD MEMORIAL HOSPITAL FOR WOMEN — STAFF

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

I have a supplementary question. Why is the minister making it so difficult for public hospitals to recruit nurses coming back from retirement or maternity leave by demanding that they work a minimum number of hours? Surely any nurse wanting to come back into the system should be given the flexibility to do as many or as few hours as possible.

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

We are providing refresher courses and paid work experience to go along with those refresher courses as part of our program to bring people back into the workplace. As members saw in *The West Australian* today, there is a nurse shortage everywhere. That is why we announced our package last week. It is extraordinary that the member continues to overlook the fact that we are investing \$1.9 billion into our hospital system.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please, members!

Mr R.H. COOK: This sort of concocted ignorance from the other side is now becoming the hallmark of this opposition.

Mr R.S. Love: Are you calling the nurses ignorant, minister?

Mr R.H. COOK: No, I am specifically calling you ignorant, member.

We are investing more in our health system than ever before, making sure that we can continue to provide the resources that the health system needs to care for the patients that we put first. What we have seen from those opposite is this concocted ignorance of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the impacts of closed international borders —

Mr R.S. Love: Concocted excuses.

Mr R.H. COOK: It is so easy for the member for Moore.

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

Mr R.H. COOK: Why are you so grumpy today? I think the member for Moore is getting dehydrated—a little bit grumpy. I think he is having a bad day from a long night.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please, members.

Mr R.H. COOK: We will continue to put significant investment into our hospital system, support our staff and, above all, make sure that the doctors and nurses at King Edward Memorial Hospital will soon have a brand new world-class hospital. That, my friends, is more than you will ever be able to do.