

CORONAVIRUS — VACCINATIONS — BOTTLE SHOPS

68. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Premier:

I have a supplementary question. If the decision was made on Friday, why then does the email that has been posted today on the website note that further advice was being provided to government?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

It says further to the initial advice on 18 February. Friday was 18 February. I will explain it to the Leader of the Opposition again. We had a meeting of the State Disaster Council. The State Disaster Council comprises a range of ministers and senior public servants. We had a discussion that went for perhaps two hours. We do this all the time. Just so members opposite understand that when it comes to COVID, I and the former Minister for Health, the current health minister and some other ministers sometimes meet daily about these issues in the morning, for hours. We go over issues and make important announcements.

Ms M.J. Davies interjected.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I just want to explain to you how government works under my government. We actually consider matters at length and we meet daily. I am on the road early and I get home late at night because that is what you do when you are dealing with a pandemic—right? That is what we have done over the course of the last two years in order to resolve these issues and keep Western Australia in the best position in the entire world. There is nowhere that has had a better outcome than in Western Australia, because we have gone through the processes and put in place the policies and the requirements that have worked for our circumstances. We are prepared to do the work, bring in the public servants, work with industry and come up with resolutions and measures that actually work across government. That is what occurs.

As I said to the member, I had a conversation at the meeting on Friday morning about bottle shops. I do not know what the member is trying to allege turns on this. We changed the policy, as I said, because the interaction in a bottle shop is three minutes on average, so the policy was not considered to be required. There may be more things that change over time. I want to remind you all: had we not put in place the mandates and the proof of vaccination, we would now be languishing somewhere in the 70 or 80 per cent vaccination rate across Western Australia. That is where we would be because we did not have the mass outbreaks of Melbourne, Sydney, and other states of Australia. The mass outbreaks drive vaccination rates; that is what they do. Over there, the commonwealth government—Scott Morrison’s government—gave more vaccines to New South Wales and Victoria per capita than it gave to Western Australia because they had the mass outbreaks. They needed to get the people of western Sydney and western Melbourne vaccinated. I understood that. I said that I agreed with that. That was obviously the case. But do not criticise us for not having the same rate of vaccination that they had at the same point in time. We did not have the mass supply of vaccines and we did not have the mass outbreaks, so what did we do? We took a different pathway. We mandated that large parts of the workforce provide proof of vaccination. Now, you criticise that. I have seen your comments in the press. I have heard you in the Parliament. I have heard you attacking that day in, day out. You join with those people who are marching around Elizabeth Quay and camping down at Langley Park. Those sorts of people are the people who are now your base. That crowd appears to be the Liberal and National Parties’ base. The crowd that is out there threatening my life appears to be your base. Now, if that is the road you want to go down, that is your choice. Our choice is to do the right thing by the people of Western Australia—to get the vaccination rates up, make sure we have the rules in place and work hard to protect the people of this state.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is the end of question time.