

ARMADALE HEALTH SERVICE

533. Dr A.D. BUTI to the Minister for Health:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to putting patients first and improving health services both in Armadale and across Western Australia. Can the minister outline to the house how this government is improving services at Armadale Health Service for new and expectant mothers?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

I thank the member for Armadale for the question. Indeed, it was a delight and a pleasure to join him this morning at the opening of the new neonatal unit at Armadale Health Service. The doctors at Armadale hospital deliver about 2 000 babies a year. Obviously, we want to see that health service supported in continuing to provide expanded services. The expansion of the neonatal unit at Armadale hospital is consistent with Labor's principles that were struck under the Reid review in the early 2000s; that is, enhancing the general operations of our district and urban hospitals so that we can get those patients out into these well-resourced general hospitals away from the expensive tertiary hospitals.

It was a delight today to see the opening of the neonatal unit at the hospital. It means that those bubs who are ill and need to continue to have hospital care but do not need the fully fledged services of a hospital like King Eddy's can continue to get the care they need in one of our suburban hospitals. This means that mums can come and visit their babies on a regular basis from the close-by communities in which they live. We now have a 24/7 roster system for paediatricians, which enables those babies to be cared for. It is consistent with the Reid report, which is about dispersing those services, and it is consistent with putting patients first. It was great to be there to support all those terrific nurses in the neonatal unit and the work that they do. They were delighted. It was terrific to see the progress that has been made at Armadale hospital.

The member for Armadale and I were there grinning from ear to ear trying to catch the eye of the television cameras. However, it is true to say that we were upstaged. Lily-Rae and Phoenix, a pair of twins who were delivered at 34 weeks and four days, were clearly of much greater interest to the assembled media. We just could not get their attention! It was great to see those babies being cared for so well in the facility. It is a terrific development for Armadale hospital.