

FIONA STANLEY HOSPITAL — PARKING

Grievance

MR T.J. HEALY (Southern River — Parliamentary Secretary) [9.28 am]: I rise to make a grievance to the Minister for Health on behalf of Canning Vale, Gosnells, Huntingdale, Southern River and all of Western Australia because we need more parking at Fiona Stanley Hospital.

Mr P.J. Rundle: Absolutely!

Mr T.J. HEALY: The member's interjection is interesting, because his party's policy says that it wishes to cancel the parking that I, all Labor members and families around Western Australia are seeking to fight for. But my grievance is not to the member for Roe; it is to the Minister for Health because she is delivering on a very, very important piece of infrastructure in my community, and that is what I seek to speak to today.

Fiona Stanley Hospital is amazing. My wife and I had one of our children at Fiona Stanley. We had our other child at King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women. They are both amazing hospitals with amazing staff and amazing people. Again, Fiona Stanley is an amazing hospital, but there is not enough parking. We have an amazing set of different services available, which people seek out. Half of my electorate, generally, for a majority of the services, will go to Fiona Stanley. Obviously, some will go to Armadale Health Service, and, of course, there is the specialist King Edward hospital in Subiaco and Perth Children's Hospital, but Fiona Stanley Hospital is a key piece of health infrastructure in my community. Families tell me when I am doorknocking and phoning, as do all the South Metropolitan members, that there is not enough parking. Again, this benefits every member in the chamber, whether regional or metropolitan, because all our families use Fiona Stanley. We know that there is not enough parking at Fiona Stanley Hospital, and my grievance to the minister today is: what can I tell my community about the parking plans that we have? Can the minister also tell me the risks that the opposition might present in trying to cancel plans for parking?

I will talk a bit about Fiona Stanley Hospital. Like I said, one of our greatest health ministers during the Gallop–Carpenter years was Jim McGinty. Not even he could have foreseen how popular and well respected our Fiona Stanley Hospital would become. Great planning was put into that complex, assisted by the train line and public infrastructure and things that we have done to get there. During the Carpenter years that was a key piece of planning. There was a change of government to the Barnett government, and it was in the Liberals' and Nationals WA's DNA to attack our health services. We saw a number of services privatised there, of which some were addressed by the McGowan and Cook governments and health minister Sanderson, and I say thank you. But the Liberals and the Nationals have always sought to attack Fiona Stanley Hospital and attack the very, very popular and important health services there.

Mr P.J. Rundle: You're forgetting who built it. Not Jim McGinty.

Mr T.J. HEALY: Is the member saying that the Liberals and Nationals built Fiona Stanley Hospital and planned it and funded it during the Gallop–Carpenter years? I do not think that is the case. They privatised the cleaning, catering, orderlies and domestic assistance. At every opportunity, when the member's side is in government it has attacked Fiona Stanley Hospital. I hope the minister can address the grievance about parking that I am placing.

We have announced that we are going to relocate the women's and babies' hospital to Fiona Stanley Hospital, and I think that is a fantastic move. It is move that is endorsed by Western Australian families, practitioners, health staff, nurses and families all across the state. That will happen in years to come. It is an important piece of infrastructure that will happen. It will not happen tomorrow, but the planning and significant investment led by the health minister is progressing to relocate that women's and babies' hospital to Fiona Stanley precinct when the time is right. My grievance to the minister is that we need the parking now. We need two multistorey car parks built at Fiona Stanley Hospital.

As I said, I have been doorknocking and phoning around my electorate for some time. I give a special shout-out to Hon Stephen Pratt in the upper house. I speak on behalf of all the members in this chamber whose families access Fiona Stanley Hospital services. I give a special shout-out to Yaz Mubarakai, Kim Giddens in Bateman, David Scaife in Cockburn, Lisa O'Malley in Bicton and Jags in Riverton. All our communities' families access Fiona Stanley Hospital. We have a number of petitions, and I will seek to table in this chamber the hardcopies that I have received that are in support of the petition that Hon Stephen Pratt, in the other place, is pushing for. The planning of the extra two car parks at Fiona Stanley Hospital is moving forward. I would love it if the minister could give further clarification on the Liberal Party policy, but as I understand it at the next election if it is elected one year from now—this is the risk that all my families need to know—the Liberal Party's policy is to cancel the car parks. That is what the Liberal Party seeks to do. We need the car parks to progress. We need this in the next 12 months. As a local dad, I worry, and I think everyone in Western Australia worries, about what health will look like under a state Liberal government. My families need to know that if the Liberal Party gets in, they will not see car parks at Fiona Stanley Hospital. They will not see important infrastructure built. They will only see further privatisation and degradation of our services.

I thank the minister for her service and I thank her team. She has an amazing Department of Health. I would like to give a special shout-out to what the minister is doing to provide for my families. But, minister, what can I tell my families about more parking at Fiona Stanley Hospital?

MS A. SANDERSON (Morley — Minister for Health) [9.35 am]: Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the grievance from the member for Southern River. He touches on an issue that is incredibly important. People complain about parking, but parking is really access to health care, and so it is really important. People who are unwell or who have disability or are in some way impaired cannot always get public transport, so parking at public hospitals is incredibly important. I think that sometimes the portfolio should be called minister for health and parking because they are so intertwined. I am cognisant of how important it is because it equals access, essentially. The member is absolutely right. Fiona Stanley Hospital has been hugely embraced. Fifteen years ago when this was being discussed, clinicians would say that no-one was going to go and work at Fiona Stanley Hospital. I remember the debate and particularly clinicians would say that no-one would work there, but it is bustling and fantastic. It is one of the biggest tertiary hospitals in the country. It is on a fantastic campus, complemented by a range of research facilities and private hospital and outpatient services, as well as it will have a health precinct with the Aegis building next door, which will also expand its range of services. This is a really exciting health campus that has room to expand and does not have the constraints that we currently have at the Queen Elizabeth II Medical Centre site.

I give Fiona Stanley Hospital a bit of a shout-out. Last year alone, 5 000 babies were born at Fiona Stanley Hospital. It is doing the heavy lifting of maternity care in the system. Those 5 000 babies were far more than was ever anticipated. That exceeded predictions and expectations, including in one 24-hour period 22 babies were born! That is one baby born every hour at Fiona Stanley Hospital. That southern corridor is growing significantly, and that is why with the other services that it provides—the state rehabilitation service, the state heart, lung and bone marrow transplant service and the state burns unit—it is a world-class hospital that is servicing a growing community, which is why the vast majority of the community has supported the decision that we as a government made to relocate the acute maternity services down to that precinct.

The QEII site carried enormous risk to staff, visitors' safety, parking constraints, impact on clinical services and possible disruption for up to 20 years. When we compare that with the site at Fiona Stanley, it is essentially a greenfield site with a car park where we need to build the hospital. Interestingly, the National members are very quiet about the Liberals' plans to scrap the plan to build the Fiona Stanley Hospital extension because they know that it will be better for regional women. We have not heard a peep out of them about it. At the election, they are going to have to choose a side. The Leader of the Liberal Party has clearly said, without rigour or seeing the risk, that she would build it at the QEII site. She would cancel services and destroy buildings, with no plan to relocate any of the services, to build the hospital there. At some point, Nationals members will have to say where they would build it.

I could go on, but I will focus on parking, because that was the key issue raised by the member. Let us talk about parking for a minute. Before I outline the plan for parking at Fiona Stanley Hospital, let us talk about the QEII site. The former Liberal government privatised the parking at QEII, which means that our government is limited in what it can do with parking there. The contract that was signed was incredibly restrictive and handed to one private company the ability to control the number of parking bays in one of our biggest and busiest health precincts. It is a key constraint and the reason that we cannot build other hospitals there. It is also a key constraint for the research institutions there—the Harry Perkins Institute of Medical Research and the Perron Institute, which does really important stroke and neurological research. During the construction of Perth Children's Hospital, all staff were shuttle bussed to and from the Graylands Hospital site because they could not find alternative parking on site.

The Fiona Stanley Hospital precinct offers a unique opportunity. We own the land. We are not restricted by commercial arrangements or space. Because we own the site and it is not constricted, we will be able to build two additional multistorey car parks on that site. That will significantly increase the overall availability of parking for staff and patients. That work is happening alongside the planning for the hospital. That is happening now. The Office of Major Transport Infrastructure Delivery is working on that planning and is looking at what road upgrades will be needed. We will not wait until the hospital is built; those multistorey car parks will be built and up and running well before the hospital is built. There will also be significant upgrades to transport and other road infrastructure, and the provision of better end-of-trip facilities.

I want to provide some comfort to the staff at Fiona Stanley Hospital: the building of the women's and babies' hospital will not reduce access to staff parking. The chief executive is working with the other parking providers around the campus to ensure that staff will still have access to parking during construction, because we will have to close those bays to build the hospital. We are cracking ahead with those extra car parking bays. This affects not only people who are accessing care but also local residents, who find that people park in their streets as well. As the member outlined, the very real risk is that a future Liberal–National government would scrap those plans for additional parking at Fiona Stanley Hospital and continue with the constrained QEII site.