

WOMEN'S AND BABIES' HOSPITAL — RELOCATION

761. Ms L. METTAM to the Minister for Health:

I refer to the minister's statement this morning that "Patient safety is always the priority and as a government we must consider the needs of all patients."

If patient safety is a priority, why did the minister make the decision to move the women's and babies' hospital with no clinical consultation, especially when the expert advice highlighted in the leaked Child and Adolescent Health Service report states that it poses an unacceptable clinical risk to women and babies, particularly neonates?

Ms A. SANDERSON replied:

I have been through the very legitimate reasons in enormous detail many, many times in this place and in the public arena. In fact, we went to the extent of tabling the business case that the government developed for the project for the women's and newborns' hospital on the Queen Elizabeth II Medical Centre site. I do not think any government before has tabled a business case of that detail and transparency about why we could not build a hospital there. When it comes to building hospitals and infrastructure projects, we have to consult infrastructure experts, and that was the business case process that the government went through. I acknowledge that there are some concerns from clinicians about the relocation. A person does not need to be an infrastructure expert to know that hospital could not really be built on the QEII site; they just need to try to find a parking bay there to know how difficult and constrained that site already is. There were so many risks in that business case, it would have been irresponsible to continue down that path. There is only one location in the metropolitan area where the hospital can go for it to be co-located with other services. To be clear: there is no co-location now. Are those who say that not having co-location is dangerous saying the services are dangerous now? Is that what the member for Vasse is saying? There is no co-location now.

Dr D.J. Honey: It is nearby.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Dr D.J. Honey interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Cottesloe, order, please!

Ms A. SANDERSON: There are a range of views. There are neonatologists at the Fiona Stanley Hospital, St John of God, Joondalup Health Campus, the Child and Adolescent Health Service, and King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women, and there are a range of views on the risks of this. Has the Leader of the Liberal Party done her due diligence and sought a range of views or is she just speaking to one group of clinicians?

Dr J. Krishnan interjected.

Ms A. SANDERSON: Yes.

There are many expert views that support this decision and the co-location with Fiona Stanley Hospital.

We are going through a consultation process. Everyone knows that King Edward Memorial Hospital is 100 years old. We do not have time on our side. There is only one place the hospital can be built in the metropolitan area and that place will give regional women better access and it will give women better access to intensive care units when they need them, which they do not currently have now. Neonatology services are run at Fiona Stanley Hospital.

I urge everyone to be cautious with their language not to undermine confidence in other services. That is what some of this language does—it undermines the public confidence in the expert care that women and babies get at Fiona Stanley Hospital. That is what the Leader of the Liberal Party is doing. She is undermining the confidence in the expert care at St John of God, Joondalup Health Campus and Fiona Stanley. I can tell members that those experts are feeling very maligned by some of the commentary. We need to build a women's and newborns' hospital, and we are committed to doing that, and only this government is committed to doing it. It is not safe and it is not possible to build the hospital appropriately on the QEII site. We are working with clinicians. There is a consultation process, and I am seeking sensible solutions to some of the risks and concerns that have been raised.