

WOMEN'S AND BABIES' HOSPITAL —  
INFRASTRUCTURE WESTERN AUSTRALIA REVIEW

**505. Ms L. METTAM to the Premier:**

I refer to Infrastructure WA's review report of the WA Labor government's decision to abandon plans to co-locate the women's and babies' hospital with Perth Children's Hospital at Queen Elizabeth II Medical Centre in favour of the Fiona Stanley Hospital precinct. Can the Premier explain why Infrastructure WA failed to include clinical services and operational planning benefits as part of its review into this government's decision?

**Mr R.H. COOK replied:**

I thank the member for the question, because it gives me the opportunity to mention that tomorrow night, the government is throwing open the gates of HBF Park to allow members of the public to watch the big game on the big screen and soak up the atmosphere and celebrate the Matildas. That is, of course, in addition to our fan zone at Forrest Chase, which, of course, has been well attended throughout the competition. It will be another exciting day for Western Australia, and I am sure that everyone will be busting a gut and looking forward to getting down there.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** Or they can come here for the private members' business of the opposition! I know where I'm going to be.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Sorry. I might have to caution the Leader of the House for bringing this house into disrepute. The Premier.

**Mr R.H. COOK:** Madam Speaker, I am with the member for Roe; every one of us will be paying attention to the important issues raised in this place, but we will all have half an eye on the Matildas game at the same time.

Once again, the member goes to the issue of the Infrastructure WA review of the business case of the decision to move the women's and babies' hospital to the Fiona Stanley Hospital site. Of course, this was something called for by the member for Vasse, along with the member for Central Wheatbelt. In estimates this year, they insisted that the report be sent to Infrastructure WA as part of an independent review of the business case, which is perfectly appropriate. The member for Vasse knows that it is appropriate, as the Minister for Health outlined, because in her contribution on 21 March 2019 she was quite effusive about the work of Infrastructure WA as an independent body to review the government's decisions about infrastructure. The member said —

... independent advice to government on the state's infrastructure needs and priorities. Although it is only right, appropriate and just for a bureaucracy to provide such advice, and there is much support for this legislation, it is also essential that decisions are made by government.

We agree with the member for Vasse that it is important that Infrastructure WA has an opportunity to review these decisions so that we can have proper oversight and ensure that we can continue to be confident of the decisions made, test the robustness of these business cases and make proper decisions in the interests of Western Australia. The member for Vasse cannot have it both ways. She cannot, on the one hand, support the legislative process that establishes that independent review and continue to support that independent process by calling, very recently, for the business case to be reviewed by Infrastructure WA and then say, as she did during an interview on 6PR on 11 August, that Infrastructure WA's independent assessment of the business case was "political trickery". Here we have someone who will do anything and say anything for a cheap political grab. That reminds me of another decision she made recently, a very important decision. She is flippity-floppity in making decisions simply because "The Clan" has decided that it does not like her line in relation to something else. She chases that little opportunity —

*Point of Order*

**Ms L. METTAM:** I have a point of order.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Order please, members! Members, I remind you that points of order are heard in silence. The Leader of the Liberal Party.

**Ms L. METTAM:** Not only are the comments from the Premier wholly incorrect —

**The SPEAKER:** Sorry; this is not an opportunity to debate the points that he has made. You have to make a point of order.

**Ms L. METTAM:** His comments are not relevant or factual.

**Ms M.M. Quirk** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Landsdale! Members, I am not upholding that point of order. The Premier.

*Questions without Notice Resumed*

**Mr R.H. COOK:** I am surprised that the member is so thin-skinned on this issue because I have not actually said what the issue is! I have not got there yet, Madam Speaker. Perhaps the member for Vasse is used to being criticised for saying and doing anything for the latest cheap political grab in the media. It is a pity that she does this on such important policy issues about where we have the new women's and babies' hospital. It is shameless that the member comes into this place and thinks she can say anything here and to the media as though no-one remembers what she said yesterday. They know what they are listening to today and they remember what the member said yesterday. Member for Vasse, I think they are onto you; we are certainly onto you.

During her interview on 6PR radio, she went on to say that IWA had manipulated data to support its decision. Here we have someone who touted for the independent body and called for the business case to be referred to the independent body, and now that she does not like the answer, she calls into question the absolute integrity of Infrastructure WA by saying that it manipulated the data—what an outrageous accusation! She said that IWA had simply “justified the captain's call”. What a pathetic analysis. It is symbolic of what the member for Vasse is prepared to do or say to simply get the grab today. Opposition members will chase the grab tomorrow and it could be completely different from what they said yesterday. The member for Vasse also criticised the director general of Health—a director general whom her side of government actually appointed. It was a Liberal government appointment. I admit that he is one of the best directors general of WA Health this state has ever had.

The member for Vasse also said that the director general of Health is simply saying what they want to hear. What an appalling accusation to make. The member can attack us; she can say what she likes about the government, but she should not go attacking public servants who work with integrity day in, day out delivering on their mandate, particularly those in Infrastructure WA. This is the same director general of Health who overcame the challenges when Fiona Stanley Hospital was opened, who dealt with the previous government's stuff-ups around the Perth Children's Hospital and who ran Fiona Stanley Hospital and Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital. He is a man of great integrity. The fact that the member opposite comes in here and critiques these people as though somehow they are part of some sort of game is, quite frankly, absurd and demeaning.

Infrastructure WA assessed the business case on the basis of the infrastructure. It may come as some surprise to the member for Vasse that Infrastructure WA should assess the business case on the basis of the infrastructure, but that is what it does. We have tabled its report, and just because the member opposite does not like it, it does not mean that she can come in here or go to the media and criticise and call into question the integrity of Infrastructure WA and the director general of Health. These are good people. The member should leave them out of her political grabs.