

WOMEN'S AND BABIES' HOSPITAL — RELOCATION

788. Ms L. METTAM to the Premier:

Given the advice from the outstanding clinicians at King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women, will the Premier accept responsibility for the death and disability of any woman or baby —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please! Please sit, member for Vasse. We have a point of order, I assume, from the member for Burns Beach.

Point of Order

Mr M.J. FOLKARD: Thank you. Madam Speaker, under section 77(1)(a) of the standing orders, preambles are not to be part of questions. Clearly that was a preamble. Your thoughts?

Mr R.H. Cook: I think he meant to say, “Your ruling?”.

The SPEAKER: Yes. The supplementary to this point in time is not out of order. I am not ruling it out of order; I would like to hear it. We have already had a very lengthy answer on this topic. The question is a bit gratuitous but we have had lots of gratuitous questions in this place before, so I am allowing it to go ahead. Ask your question, member for Vasse.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Ms L. METTAM: I have asked the question —

The SPEAKER: I could not hear it in full.

Ms L. METTAM: Okay. Given the clinical advice from the outstanding clinicians at King Edward Memorial Hospital, will the Premier accept responsibility for the death or disability of any woman or baby because of his refusal —

Dr J. Krishnan interjected.

Ms L. METTAM: — to listen to that expert advice.

I seek leave to table the letter that the minister is clearly ignoring.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members, attention please! Firstly, member, you cannot table anything. You might seek leave to lay something on the table for the rest of the day's sitting but that is about all you can seek leave for. If you would like to do that, I give you the opportunity to do it now.

Ms L. METTAM: I seek leave to table this letter for the remainder of the day's sitting.

[The paper was tabled for the information of members.]

The SPEAKER: Secondly, member for Riverton, you may feel passionately about this and I can understand why. Like a lot of other people, you may not like the question that is being asked, but the questioner has the right to ask the question, however unpalatable you may find it.

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I think the member for Riverton is perhaps expressing his anger on behalf of the expert clinicians at Fiona Stanley Hospital, for whose views the member for Vasse clearly has disregard and disdain. I think all clinicians, right across our system, do an amazing job. That is why we are listening to them very carefully on these deeply complex issues.

As to the second part of the member's question, I think it is perhaps one of the most distasteful question that has ever been brought to this place. Members of the public watch us on a daily basis and they form a view about the conduct of members of Parliament, and that informs their view about politicians generally. That, member for Vasse, did not make a contribution to the dignity of this particular chamber. I ask the member: would she accept responsibility for those patients who potentially would be disrupted and have adverse health outcomes because of the disruption caused by the development of a women's and babies' hospital on top of Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital?

The SPEAKER: We will take that as a rhetorical question and we will not anticipate an answer, thank you.

Mr R.H. COOK: Would the member for Vasse take responsibility for the adverse clinical outcomes that would occur from her policy to cancel the redevelopment of the women's and babies' hospital and not see it redeveloped for another 10 to 20 years?

Ms L. Mettam: We are committed to a world-class facility. Your plan will never be a world-class facility.

Several members interjected.

Mr R.H. COOK: The policy of those opposite is to cancel the women's and babies' hospital and not see it developed by, dare I say, any members of Parliament who are in the chamber today. The delay would be between a decade and two decades.

Mr W.J. Johnston: The member for Rockingham would still be here!

Mr R.H. COOK: Member for Rockingham, you might still be here!

That is what we are facing here. That is what Infrastructure WA told us in the independent advice the opposition asked for—that it would see the hospital delayed for between 10 and 20 years.

Dr D.J. Honey: That is rubbish.

Mr R.H. COOK: I take the interjection from the member for Cottesloe —

The SPEAKER: Please don't.

Mr R.H. COOK: — because this is what we see from those opposite all the time. They call for independent oversight, they call for a review and they call for a report. When the report from the experts comes out in a way that they do not like, they call it, in the words of the member for Vasse, political trickery. It is this selective passion for truth—this selective idea of truth on the other side. The only thing they care about is a political line. However, in this case the political line the member for Vasse has run out would cause adverse clinical outcomes for patients for between one and two decades. The opposition would take credit for that.