

ROYAL PERTH HOSPITAL AND FIONA STANLEY HOSPITAL

Mr P. PAPALIA to the Minister for Health:

What are the costs and other implications of the Liberal leader's backflip on the run in Parliament yesterday when, in addition to keeping the old Royal Perth Hospital operating, he decided to support the state government's plan to extend Fiona Stanley Hospital from 643 beds to 1 000 beds as part of stage 2?

Mr J.A. McGINTY replied:

I thank the member for Peel for the question and can I also compliment the member for Alfred Cove for what must have truly been her finest moment in this Parliament yesterday? The member for Alfred Cove managed to extract not only a massive backflip from the Leader of the Opposition on the run in Parliament yesterday, but also a \$2 billion commitment. Well done to the member for Alfred Cove.

After the member for Vasse became the Leader of the Opposition, he was in the media frequently, for instance on Geoff Hutchison's ABC program on 25 January, saying —

... the Government also have longer term plans for increasing the bed capacity of Fiona Stanley Hospital up towards a thousand beds, and that's something that we haven't committed to, because we have a very strong view about retaining Royal Perth Hospital.

The Leader of the Opposition used words to very similar effect on 6PR on 18 February. It was therefore quite clear that the Liberal opposition, under the leadership of the member for Vasse, would support stage 1 of Fiona Stanley Hospital—643 beds—but not stage 2 because it wanted to retain Royal Perth Hospital. It happens to cost \$472 million a year to run Royal Perth Hospital; that is, just the Wellington Street campus. Over the four-year forward estimates period that is an additional almost \$2 billion that the Leader of the Opposition committed to in his backflip yesterday in making sure that he was trying to not only do a backflip, but also appeal to everyone.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Dr K.D. Hames interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Dawesville!

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Mr J.A. McGINTY: Mr Speaker, that is in addition to the fact that Royal Perth Hospital—certainly those buildings south of Wellington Street—is old, run-down and would cost a small fortune —

Dr K.D. Hames interjected.

Mr J.A. McGINTY: It is estimated at anywhere between half a billion dollars and \$1 billion —

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Dawesville to order.

Mr J.A. McGINTY: — simply to bring up to acceptable compliance today, but it would still be an old hospital tarted up, and that additional capital commitment would be required as well. We also have something that I think is very clearly —

Mr T. Buswell interjected.

The SPEAKER: I call the Leader of the Opposition to order for the third time.

Mr J.A. McGINTY: We have an additional cost as a result of the Leader of the Opposition's effort yesterday of \$472 million a year—a budget blunder of almost \$2 billion over the budget period. The Reid report recommended—it has seemingly been endorsed by everyone in Western Australia—reduced reliance on tertiary hospital beds and a greater enhancement of general hospital beds closer to where people live. This commitment from the Leader of the Opposition to be all things to all people would destroy that very important principle that was being implemented by this government, if he ever had the chance to implement it.

I do not know why the Leader of the Opposition would want to condemn Western Australians who use the public hospital system to old, rundown second-class facilities when they have the opportunity to be treated in world-class facilities at the new Fiona Stanley Hospital. The economic credentials of the Leader of the Opposition took a big battering yesterday. To make this sort of decision on the run, committing \$2 billion of state taxpayers' money to something that is unnecessary —

Dr K.D. Hames interjected.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Dawesville to order for the second time.

Mr J.A. McGINTY: — shows the inexperience of the Leader of the Opposition, and it is a decision that he might well regret.