

FIONA STANLEY HOSPITAL — FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

Standing Orders Suspension — Motion

MR M. MCGOWAN (Rockingham — Leader of the Opposition) [2.43 pm] — without notice: I move —

That so much of standing orders be suspended so far as to enable the following motion to be moved —

That this house condemns the Minister for Health for the privatisation of facilities management at Fiona Stanley Hospital and the subsequent failures and mismanagement.

This is an important issue that requires some discussion because members of the medical profession themselves have indicated that these failures have compromised patient safety. That is what members of the medical profession themselves have said, and it is important that we get to the bottom of all the issues involved. The Leader of the House has summoned me to sit down, as I understand that he is going to indicate there is agreement on this matter, so I will.

Standing Orders Suspension — Amendment to Motion

MR J.H.D. DAY (Kalamunda — Leader of the House) [2.44 pm]: The member for Midland and I have discussed this issue, and the government will agree—with a certain degree of reluctance but we will nevertheless agree—to suspend standing orders to allow a matter of public interest-type debate. However, I move to add words to the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition as follows —

To insert after “moved” —

, subject to the debate being limited to 20 minutes for government members and 20 minutes for non-government members.

Amendment put and passed.

Standing Orders Suspension — Motion, as Amended

The SPEAKER: Members, as this is a motion without notice to suspend standing orders, it will need the support of an absolute majority for it to proceed. If I hear a dissentient voice, I will be required to divide the Assembly.

Question put and passed with an absolute majority.

Motion

MR M. MCGOWAN (Rockingham — Leader of the Opposition) [2.45 pm]: I move —

That this house condemns the Minister for Health for the privatisation of facilities management at Fiona Stanley Hospital and the subsequent failures and mismanagement.

Another day, another disaster for the Minister for Health. Another day, another ministerial failure on the part of this government. This is an extraordinarily important issue that deserves some proper explanation from the government for what has occurred. The reason that is the case is that members of the medical profession themselves, as members who follow the press will know, have indicated that these failures have compromised patient safety, and that requires a full explanation from the minister on a range of things. How has it happened that sterilisation procedures have not been put in place properly at this hospital? Why did it happen? What has the risk been to patient safety over the course of the last few months that this hospital has been in operation? Where exactly have the services been taken from to replace the services at Fiona Stanley Hospital? What services have been taken? Where exactly have they been taken from, and what was the cost of it? What is the entire cost to the public system and to Fiona Stanley Hospital, and what other services have been impacted at other hospitals across the metropolitan area or indeed Western Australia as a consequence of this failure?

When this contract was signed, it was explained to the public of Western Australia by this minister. On 30 November 2011 in *Hansard*, the Minister for Health said this regarding Serco —

This company offers an extremely good product that we have gone through in absolute detail. Sure, the contract is bigger than the contracts Serco has with hospitals in the United Kingdom, but we have gone through this contract in absolute detail. ... I think that anybody who goes to that hospital as a patient will be totally impressed by the service that they will receive.

That is, if they do not want to receive treatment with properly sterilised instruments!

What did this minister say when information came out on the huge delay in opening the hospital and on the consequent payment—it turns out—of \$136 million or thereabouts from the state to Serco to operate a hospital without patients? The delay went on for month after month with the glowing new facility sitting there with everything in it bar a patient; it was fully operational without a patient. What did the minister say about that

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when explaining that? On 10 June 2013, as justification for that hospital not having patients and as justification for taxpayers paying over \$130 million for a hospital to operate without patients, he said —

“Our ... priority is patient safety, and thus we have to be sure the hospital is opened progressively where all systems can be thoroughly tested.”

That is one quote after another. This government and this minister have said one thing about this contract and have justified it on some grounds, and it turns out today that those grounds were false. Those answers in question time that do not provide any detail, do not allow us to understand the full extent of what has gone on and do not explain who is paying for the additional staff for the portage services are not good enough. We seek answers for each and every one of those questions. We seek proper and full details on each and every one of those questions. The fact that the minister knew about this in December and did not reveal it to this house is, frankly, not good enough. I would not say that it is unforgivable, but it is not good enough. That was two or three months ago. That is two or three months during which we have known that patient safety was compromised and the public was not informed—that is not good enough!

Dr K.D. Hames: Not true.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Is the Australian Medical Association wrong? Is Dr Michael Gannon wrong? Dr Michael Gannon is wrong according to the minister. He is wrong and the minister is right.

Dr K.D. Hames interjected.

The SPEAKER: Minister for Health!

Mr M. McGOWAN: Services have already been stripped from Serco, including electronic records management, internal logistics—essentially orderlies—and now we find that sterilisation services are not working. Did members hear the minister’s explanation in question time? The minister said, “There have been a few other difficulties and a few other issues”, but the minister did not say what they were! His answer was that he could not remember. Maybe the minister should focus on the health portfolio and give up tourism. Maybe that is what the minister should do; he should focus on patient safety and give tourism to someone who can apply proper attention to that portfolio. The contract that the minister entered into has caused these issues. We have received an inadequate explanation of that and there is an additional cost to taxpayers from these matters. According to the minister’s own report from a committee chaired by a Liberal Party member and with a Liberal Party majority, there has been additional funding for the hospital of \$330 million, up in the midyear review by another \$16 million. That is an additional \$346 million, predominantly because of the contract the minister signed with Serco. All around there has been failure.

Dr K.D. Hames interjected.

Mr M. McGOWAN: That is the minister’s own report. All around there has been failure and the minister needs to answer the questions I indicated up-front: What happened? How did it happen? Why did it happen? What has the risk been? Where have the services come from? Who is paying? What other services have suffered across the system? And, what are the other difficulties that the minister has been advised on in relation to this contract?

MR C.J. BARNETT (Cottesloe — Premier) [2.53 pm]: I do not know how many times the Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition have attacked Fiona Stanley Hospital or whether members opposite have taken the time to go to Fiona Stanley Hospital and talk to the staff and look at the hospital. It is a magnificent hospital. The clinical services and the hospital management systems that it provides are highly sophisticated. It is a huge, massive complex. It is not as though existing hospitals do not have problems from time to time, but a new hospital that is such a leap up in sophistication and size will inevitably have more issues during the commissioning and settling-in process. Although the member might argue philosophically about the outsourcing or contracting of services, I find it offensive—I think it is offensive to the people working in that hospital—that he denigrates the hospital and the people who work in it. He absolutely does that all the time; he denigrates those people.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Members opposite jeer and carry on, but I have been out there on a few occasions—they probably have not—and talked to the staff, particularly the Serco staff. Many of them have come from different occupations, and for many of them it is their first good job and they are proud of it. They wear their uniforms and they are proud of the hospital, the company they work for and the service that they provide yet members opposite jeer at them, denigrate them and criticise them publicly. One of the big issues during the commissioning

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of that hospital over the summer period was staff morale. It was high, but people felt let down by the constant carping and criticism, primarily from opposition members of Parliament. It was demoralising for young people, many of whom were in their best and future jobs. Who are these people?

Ms M.M. Quirk: Doctors.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: No, they are not doctors. I will tell members who the Serco staff are. Serco staff fall into 25 categories, including cleaners. Do members reckon they are highly qualified or highly paid? I do not think so. Another category is external transport. Do members opposite think they are highly qualified and highly paid? I do not think so. There are grounds maintenance staff; the people maintaining those beautiful gardens. Linen services is another category. These are the people members opposite are criticising —

Mr D.J. Kelly interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Bassendean, I call you to order for the second time.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Another category is patient catering; the people who help make and take all the food around. Other categories are pest control, reception services and waste management services. So the great champions of the Labor movement are out there criticising and making derogatory comments about the hospital that are affecting the lowest skilled, lower paid workers in that hospital. So much for the champions of the working people —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Mirrabooka!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: They are proud Western Australians working in a magnificent hospital and the only criticism they are getting is from Labor Party members. Go out to the hospital and talk to these people and see them in their nice new uniforms proudly doing their jobs. Opposition members do not do that; they come in here day after day to criticise them and the work they do. The Labor Party today has sunk to that level; it cares nothing for working Australians, for young people in their first job or for the unemployed who have been trained and retrained to work in that hospital. Many of them who had never used a computer terminal in their life have been trained to use one. Literally hundreds of people fit into that category. They have been trained in skills they did not have. All opposition members do is criticise and make fun of them. The Leader of the Opposition sneers and giggles now. I wish those 1 200 Serco people could see his attitude towards them. This is a great hospital and it has brought great employment for people who did not have a job or who have now got a better job. Opposition members should better themselves and make constructive comments rather than just criticise. Opposition members knocked Perth Stadium, Elizabeth Quay and our hospital. They knocked the Albany Health Campus the other day and the National Anzac Centre. Do opposition members see anything of value in Western Australia? No they do not. They are the most pessimistic, negative, boring bunch of people I have ever come across!

MR D.J. KELLY (Bassendean) [2.58 pm]: What an extraordinary performance from the Premier. The Premier is the workers' best friend! Honestly, for the Premier to say that he is such a great friend of Serco staff is just incredible. If the Premier went out and talked to the Serco staff at Fiona Stanley Hospital, he would find that each and every one of them would rather be employed by the Department of Health than by Serco. But they are not because the government decided to privatise the work at the hospital so the government could save some dollars.

Mr C.J. Barnett interjected.

The SPEAKER: Premier, I call you to order for the first time.

Mr D.J. KELLY: Unlike the Premier, I have actually met and talked to Serco employees. I consider some of those people to be my friends. I can tell the Premier that each and every one of them —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Carine, I call you to order for the first time. The member for Bassendean does not like being interrupted when he is speaking.

Mr D.J. KELLY: Each and every staff member out there would prefer to be employed by the Department of Health, but they are not because this government —

The SPEAKER: Member for Forrestfield, I call you to order for the first time.

Mr D.J. KELLY: They are not employed by the Department of Health because this government and this minister made a decision to privatise services at Fiona Stanley Hospital.

Point of Order

Mr Mark McGowan; Mr John Day; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Dave Kelly; Ms Rita Saffioti; Speaker; Mr Joe Francis; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I heard the member for Pilbara and member for Kalamunda interject.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much for that; I will remember that.

Debate Resumed

Mr D.J. KELLY: This hospital was planned and paid for by the previous Labor government. The only significant decision that this government has made —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Wanneroo, I call you to order for the first time. We are getting nowhere fast. I want to hear the member for Bassendean.

Mr D.J. KELLY: The only significant decision that this government made on this hospital was to give the contract to Serco. The government was warned; it was told by numerous people that to go down this path would lead to increased costs and disruption at that hospital. But did the government listen? No; this minister put the contract out to tender, and what did he get in response? Three companies were shortlisted. One company pulled out, the second company was Brookfield, which was building the hospital but had no experience in running a hospital, and the third company was Serco. One company pulled out, one company had never run a hospital, and the third company was Serco. In that sort of a contest, Serco was always going to be ranked first, because there was no-one else. The way the government structured it, Serco was always going to get this contract. I have the assessment panel documentation here. The panel's assessment was that it was "reasonably confident" that Serco could do the job—not confident, only reasonably confident. The panel gave Serco a rating of 65 per cent, but the government went ahead and gave it the contract. The minister could have done the responsible thing and said, "I know the Department of Health can run a hospital, because Royal Perth Hospital, Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital, Princess Margaret Hospital for Children, and King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women are all run by the Department of Health. I would be 'confident' that that the Department of Health could run a hospital." Instead, the minister opted for Serco, of whom the selection panel was only "reasonably confident". The minister chose the reckless option because he and the government have a fetish for privatisation. He believes that if we privatise everything, we will improve it. The minister was warned, and exactly what he was warned about has come to pass.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Pilbara, I call you to order for the second time.

Mr D.J. KELLY: In question time today the Minister for Health said there was no crisis, but operations are being cancelled and delayed, and doctors are pushing their own patients because of delays of up to two hours to get an orderly or a porter to move a patient. This is in a hospital that was left for 12 months without patients to iron out teething problems. If the minister does not think that having operations delayed and doctors pushing their own patients is a crisis, he should be ashamed of himself. The minister was warned that this would happen, and what people warned him about has come to pass.

This government is merely repeating the mistakes that it made when it was in power during the 1990s. The government of that time privatised the orderly contract at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital. It was one of the first contracts that it handed out. The Minister for Health and the Premier were both ministers in that government. P&O Catering and Services got the contract, and cut the number of orderlies from more than 100 to 56. There was chaos in the hospital, so P&O came back to the government and said it could not do the work, and the government agreed to pay additional money. The company still could not do the work, so the Court government threw it out. The government is going down exactly the same path with Serco. It agreed to a contract at a price, with a number of staff, and the minister has just told us that he has agreed to pay for an additional 50 staff. That is exactly the same scenario. At Royal Perth Hospital, the government privatised the cleaning during the 1990s, and what happened? More than 100 patients caught a superbug infection, and the government admitted in this Parliament that privatising the cleaning was a significant contributor to that vancomycin resistant enterococcus outbreak. The Minister for Health said that he had learnt his lesson, but clearly, at Fiona Stanley and elsewhere, when it comes to privatisation the minister has not learnt his lesson at all. If patients being pushed by doctors instead of porters and having their operations delayed or cancelled is not a crisis, I do not know what the minister thinks a crisis would look like.

Fiona Stanley Hospital is supposed to be the flagship hospital in our health system, and all the minister has done is complicate this process immensely by having Serco sign that contract. The minister needs to tell us today what he intends to do to fix it. He should get rid of Serco, using the provisions under that contract to remove it from this hospital.

Mr Mark McGowan; Mr John Day; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Dave Kelly; Ms Rita Saffioti; Speaker; Mr Joe Francis; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames

MR J.M. FRANCIS (Jandakot — Minister for Corrective Services) [3.07 pm]: The reality is that there is nothing new here. We are seeing here today the typical tugging of the forelock and genuflecting to the union movement that the Labor Party always does.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Albany, I call you to order for the first time. Now, through the Chair, minister.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: The only fetish in this place is the Labor Party's fetish for the union movement. Time and again, members opposite come in here, genuflect and say yes to the unions. We saw *The Giants* in the streets of Perth last week and I can see the giants every time I walk in here. They are having their puppet strings tugged all the time. They will never have the guts to stand up to the union movement. I have dealt with this in corrective services many times. The classic example is Acacia Prison, a contract awarded to Serco by a Labor government. According to the Labor Party, if it wins the next election, it will rip up that contract—1 400 prisoners, at \$150 a day; a saving of over \$200 000 a day to the taxpayer or \$1.5 million a week—that it originally gave to Serco when it was in government.

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Warnbro, please listen to the member for Jandakot. Do not interject when other people are speaking.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: The reality is that 400 extra prisoners a day, at \$150 per prisoner per day, is a significant saving to the state taxpayers. The Labor Party would just rip up that contract. The real issue here is, if the Labor Party wins the next election, will it rip up the Fiona Stanley Hospital contract? What would that cost the state of Western Australia? The opposition has absolutely no credibility because it is too busy paying lip service to its union bosses. The Labor Party is not hurting the union movement; it is the union movement itself. We only have to look at what happened yesterday with the Maritime Union of Australia at Fremantle. Members need not take my word for it; it is all there in colour on the front page of *The Australian*. The union movement in Western Australia, which is pulling all the strings of members opposite, like *The Giants* —

Several members interjected.

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

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Members opposite will never have the guts to stand up to the union bosses, because as we all know, the union bosses control their preselections, and they are terribly afraid of losing their seats. We have seen it happen. That is the whole reason the member for Bassendean even got here in the first place. It was because his union bosses pulled the strings over his predecessor.

Point of Order

Mr M. McGOWAN: I moved a motion that standing orders be suspended so that the Minister for Health can explain himself about the privatisation of facilities management at Fiona Stanley Hospital and subsequent failures and mismanagement.

Mr P.B. Watson interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Albany!

Mr M. McGOWAN: It is a question of relevance, Mr Speaker. This is a very specific motion about a very specific subject matter. It is not about a broad range of issues across Western Australia on any subject matter. Members on this side restrain themselves to issues surrounding the privatisation of Fiona Stanley Hospital. I am calling on the government to have the same rules apply to them as the opposition forces on itself.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: To the motion, which actually is not one, what have they got opposite? They have brought on a philosophical debate about contracting-out and unions. We talk about unions, and then opposition members all shy away; they are too scared to deal with it. Stand up and have a debate!

Mr W.J. Johnston interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Cannington, I call you to order for the second time. I am on my feet. You can make some analogies and whatnot, Minister for Corrective Services, but come back to the point, thank you.

Debate Resumed

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I will just wind up, Mr Speaker, because I know other people want a say.

Mr P.B. Watson interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Albany, I call you to order for the second time.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: The truth is that those workers out at Fiona Stanley Hospital are human beings doing their very best, and the only reason that opposition members do not like them is because they have got Serco written on their shirts.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: I call the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

MR R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [3.12 pm]: Mr Speaker —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Cannington, I call you to order for the third time, and the Minister for Health for the second time.

Mr R.H. COOK: Once again, we see the Minister for Health doing his utmost best to avoid any form of accountability when it comes to this place. He was not able to come in when Parliament started today —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: There are five minutes left on the clock. I want to hear from the Member for Kwinana, and then we will come back to the government.

Mr R.H. COOK: The minister was too gutless to come in early today and he managed to contrive some reason why he was elsewhere, and now we see he is too reluctant to get up and face the music today. What do we get? While the Premier is on the subject of thuggery, I think that is where we were really at when he was making his contribution earlier today. It was the most ridiculous rant, as though somehow this is about attacking staff in the workplace. This has nothing to do with that. The Minister for Corrective Services over there talked about a contract in the corrective services area. This motion has nothing to do with that. We have no problem with the staff working at Fiona Stanley Hospital. We have the task of holding the government to account for the biggest public sector privatisation in this state's history. We are responding to the reports in the newspapers, to correspondence coming to our offices, and to the very failures of this hospital.

The minister said today in the media that this is all about teething problems: "This is about teething problems; you've got to expect this sort of thing to arise in a hospital that has just opened." But let us not forget for a second that this is a hospital that had staff in place since April last year. This is a hospital that had the longest soft opening in the history of the health sector. This is a hospital that had the management in place all last year supposedly working out these bugs. We had this extraordinary rant from the Premier today—the sort of rant we are only used to seeing in the post-dinner period—pretending that this is about staff. This is not; this is about accountability. We want to know how these service failures happened. It is not about us, Premier. This is about the Australian Medical Association, the Australian Nursing Federation and other concerned staff. Why are these things allowed to happen? What has been the risk to patient safety? How is it that these services so badly fail when they have had so long to bed them down? Who is paying for the results of these service failures? What are the other services, as the minister says he was advised, that are confronting difficulties? This is all what this is about—it is a failure to oversight a contract. This is not about an attack on staff, which is a ridiculous straw man effort to try to distract the debate. This is about a minister and the management of the most expensive contract in privatisation in Western Australia's history. What other services are in trouble? Who is paying for these service failures, and what are the other areas of difficulty? The minister has to answer these questions. We hear about these problems day in, day out. We get letters from people, and I will quote just one letter on these matters; it states —

While the technology is impressive, it is worse than useless when the staff clearly haven't been trained properly in how to utilize it, and in addition it seems the simple but important things like catering, communication systems and cleanliness have been overlooked and or lost in the process.

This is a typical example of a patient going in there and experiencing the services that they expect at a hospital that is so expensive, but did not receive. We simply ask the questions. Why is it that the phones could not work and that that was considered to be a danger to patient safety? Why is it that we are having all these portage problems when they have had so long to bed down these issues? Why is it that a whole range of complaints at the moment are coming through around machinery, equipment failures, and why is it that doctors are complaining about the sterilisation services—confirmed via the minister's own people yesterday in the media? This is not about knocking staff; this is about holding a minister to account—the same minister who has failed time and time again to be accountable to this place and to the people of Western Australia. We saw it last week in the Healthway affair; we see it this week in the privatisation affair. This is an embarrassment for this minister. Privatisation was his key initiative and, as we are seeing, the privatisation birds are coming home to roost, and it is his key failure.

Mr Mark McGowan; Mr John Day; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Dave Kelly; Ms Rita Saffioti; Speaker; Mr Joe Francis; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames

DR K.D. HAMES (Dawesville — Minister for Health) [3.17 pm]: It is good to have the opportunity once again to discuss this issue, but I cannot believe the member for Bassendean getting up and talking about the “fetish” for Serco. I do not know: Who was it in the member’s government who appointed Serco and gave it the contract for Acacia Prison? Who was it? Who was the current opposition’s minister who had this so-called fetish for Serco? Do opposition members remember? No answer. No-one wants to cough up. I bet opposition members know, but they do not like him using the word “fetish” about their minister, their government, that appointed Serco to the Acacia contract.

Mr B.S. Wyatt interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Victoria Park!

Dr K.D. HAMES: It did not come from one contract those opposite inherited. It was not something that Liberals put in and members opposite took over and said, “Bad luck; we have gotta put up with the rotten mob, Serco.” Members opposite appointed it and gave it the contract, and so suddenly, because they figure privatisation is a dirty word, and they are so desperate for government, and so desperate to win and get in, that they will say and do whatever it takes.

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for West Swan!

Dr K.D. HAMES: Here is the local union rep, whose union looks after the lowest —

Mr D.J. Kelly interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Bassendean.

Dr K.D. HAMES: I think I was prevented from interjecting on that member, Mr Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Yes, he is very sensitive, minister!

Dr K.D. HAMES: Not so happy now, is he?

Ms J.M. Freeman interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Mirrabooka! Right, minister—through the Chair.

Mr D.J. Kelly interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Bassendean!

Dr K.D. HAMES: He represents the union that represents the lowest paid workers in state government, yet those members are the highest contributors to the Labor Party. So, those poor bloody workers who do not get paid very much have every dollar that they have got ripped out of them to make sure they give it to support the Labor Party and the member’s cronies, just to give him a free ride into Parliament—a free ride into that seat over there. What a hypocrite! He is always complaining about the low-paid, yet he grabs everything off them for his mates in government!

Mr D.J. Kelly interjected.

Dr K.D. HAMES: Yes! The member for Bassendean does not want to stay on that subject for too long, does he?

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Warnbro!

Dr K.D. HAMES: A contract to the private sector was initiated by the Labor Party to Serco. They are the ones that brought Serco to this state. In my view, Serco has done a very good job. It has a large number of other contracts as well—Acacia, Wandoo, Court Security and Custodial Services, and Transperth.

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Warnbro!

Dr K.D. HAMES: Federally, Serco has contracts in defence and immigration. Around 2 500 staff in this hospital are working for a private contractor and doing a very good job.

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for West Swan!

Mr Mark McGowan; Mr John Day; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Dave Kelly; Ms Rita Saffioti; Speaker; Mr Joe Francis; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames

Dr K.D. HAMES: Let me back to the comments that the Premier made about Serco and its staff. Some of those staff, sure, have come from outside the public sector, outside the health system and outside government. But a lot of them were working already in our other hospitals. A lot of them might not have been their members —

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for West Swan!

Dr K.D. HAMES: They were actively discouraging people from signing up with Serco. They were trying to stop them.

Mr R.H. Cook interjected.

Dr K.D. HAMES: The Labor Party, and the union in particular, was actively discouraging its members from signing up to work with Serco at the private hospital. A lot of those workers have worked for the state government. They are proud public servants, who have worked for years in our public hospitals. These are the same people who members opposite are now denigrating and saying they do not care about the running of the hospital.

Mr R.H. Cook interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Kwinana, I call you to order for the first time.

Dr K.D. HAMES: I recall being at that hospital on opening day, and what a proud day that was.

Mr D.J. Kelly interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Bassendean!

Dr K.D. HAMES: That is a magnificent hospital, and we had a fantastic opening, with Professor Fiona Stanley being there to be part of it. We then went to the wards, where the media were, and the first cohort of patients—the rehabilitation patients—were brought into the hospital, and standing side by side with our health department nurses and doctors and other staff were the Serco workers, in their uniform. Not only are they proud as punch to be working at that hospital, they are proud to be Serco workers. They are proud of the work they are doing. Those workers are doing a fantastic job, working hand in hand with the state government staff and making sure —

Several members interjected.

Dr K.D. HAMES: Mr Speaker, there is a constant interjection from the other side. It really is getting difficult to say anything.

The SPEAKER: Member for Bassendean! Member for Mirrabooka! Member for Albany!

Dr K.D. HAMES: They are proud to be there and to be part of that system and part of setting up the hospital, and so are all the other staff who are working at that hospital.

We have gone through in question time the issues that we have had at Fiona Stanley Hospital, particularly with sterilisation. I put it to members that patients were not put at risk, because if there was any possibility that the health of patients would be put at risk, those operations were pushed back to make sure that all the necessary equipment was available. This happened in only a handful of cases. It was not a large proportion of cases. Most of the operations went exceptionally well, as smooth as silk, and everything was done correctly.

Ms M.M. Quirk interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Girrawheen, I call you to order for the second time.

Dr K.D. HAMES: There was only one area in which some things were done incorrectly. It was serious. I am not trying to downplay that.

Ms M.M. Quirk interjected,

Dr K.D. HAMES: The member for Girrawheen just has no control!

The staff who were working there —

Ms M.M. Quirk interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Girrawheen, I call you to order for the third time.

Dr K.D. HAMES: What I do not understand is that every time the member for Girrawheen interjects, she either looks to her mates to see whether they are watching her, or she looks to the media to see whether they are watching her—every single time she interjects—and they are not! They are all looking somewhere else!

Mr Mark McGowan; Mr John Day; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Dave Kelly; Ms Rita Saffioti; Speaker; Mr Joe Francis; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames

These staff have done a fantastic job. There are problems to be sorted out. Part of the problem is that they have not been able to get enough staff with sufficient expertise to run such a major procedure, given that they need to provide all the equipment which is required to run the surgery, which is cranking up all the time. They have taken a specialist from both Fremantle Hospital and Royal Perth Hospital. Surgeons often have special requirements and special needs; they have favourite instruments and favourite packs, and they like certain things to be in there —

Mr D.J. Kelly interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Bassendean, I call you to order for the third time.

Dr K.D. HAMES: Surgeons can be very specific in their preferences and requirements for instruments, and they have to take all those instruments from the other hospital and move them to this hospital, as well as all the stuff they have purchased, and make sure it is all sterilised in a pack. We now have a senior person from Fremantle Hospital—I am not sure whether more than one person has come from Fremantle, but certainly one person has come from Fremantle—to assist in that area and make sure Serco gets it right. Serco will either get it right or it will not. If Serco does not get it right, the contract will be terminated. If Serco does get it right, the problem will be solved and we can proceed along the path that we have gone down. For example, the acting director general of Health told me that he has been involved personally in frequent meetings about this matter, as is his responsibility as the acting director, and next week I will be meeting with Serco as well to go through those issues.

The question is: why did we go out to the private sector in the first place? It is because the state government is determined to do things in a way that will save money for the government. The former Labor government had an opportunity with Joondalup hospital when the Joondalup contract was coming to an end. A proposal was put forward by Joondalup for a combination of Ramsay Health Care funding and state government funding to significantly expand the size of that hospital. The Labor Party could have said, “No. We are against privatisation. We are not going to be in this. Thanks, Ramsay; see you later”. But it did not do that. When we came to government, the former Labor government was well down the track in negotiating a new contract with Ramsay Health Care and had put in a significant amount of money, and it then significantly abandoned that service. I have reminded members opposite on a few occasions that after the Labor Party lost government and I became the Minister for Health, one of the first things that the former Minister for Health, Jim McGinty, said to me was, “I am sorry, but we are \$100 million under budget to get the work done at Joondalup. You will have to go and find another \$100 million to finish the contract that we have done.” The former Labor government entered into that contract, and it stuck with it. Why did it do that? It did that because it was a good contract. It saved money for the taxpayers of this state. If the former Labor government had taken back that contract and had taken over the running of Joondalup hospital, there is no way on this earth that it could have run that hospital with the same efficiency and for the same price as it is currently being run by Ramsay Health Care. The health department, under the former Labor government and under its health minister, made that decision.

Mr D.J. Kelly interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Bassendean!

Dr K.D. HAMES: Why are we going down the path of using Serco for all those services that are not direct patient services? It is because it is a saving to government. It is the best use of taxpayers’ money. It will save us in the order of half a billion dollars over the 20 years of the contract. So, why would we not do that? Why would we stick to a system that will cost us half a billion dollars more? Members opposite say that is because in the public hospitals, we provide a better service. We do not. We provide an excellent service in our public hospitals, but it is not better than the service that is provided by, for example, Ramsay Health Care.

Mr M. McGowan interjected.

Dr K.D. HAMES: I have answered the opposition’s questions over and over again. This is the third time it has moved a matter of public interest on this hospital. It raises issues all the time.

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Armadale, I call you to order for the first time.

Dr K.D. HAMES: Members opposite never get up any questions, until someone tells them that a doctor has said there is a problem somewhere, and then suddenly they think, “We are on a winner here. We want to win government. We want to make the government look bad on health.” That is despite the massive success we have had within the health system, taking it away from all the rubbish that the Labor Party had year after year when it was in government, with the health system failing. We have made the health system work, and the only thing members opposite can do is run around and pick on little things that are going wrong, in a massive \$2 billion project that is the best hospital in the Southern Hemisphere.

Extract from *Hansard*
[ASSEMBLY — Wednesday, 25 February 2015]
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Mr Mark McGowan; Mr John Day; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Dave Kelly; Ms Rita Saffioti; Speaker; Mr Joe Francis; Mr Roger Cook; Dr Kim Hames

Division

Question put and a division taken with the following result —

Ayes (21)

Ms L.L. Baker
Dr A.D. Buti
Mr R.H. Cook
Ms J. Farrer
Ms J.M. Freeman
Mr W.J. Johnston

Mr D.J. Kelly
Mr F.M. Logan
Mr M. McGowan
Ms S.F. McGurk
Mr M.P. Murray
Mr P. Papalia

Mr J.R. Quigley
Ms M.M. Quirk
Mrs M.H. Roberts
Ms R. Saffioti
Mr C.J. Tallentire
Mr P.C. Tinley

Mr P.B. Watson
Mr B.S. Wyatt
Mr D.A. Templeman (*Teller*)

Noes (34)

Mr P. Abetz
Mr F.A. Alban
Mr C.J. Barnett
Mr I.C. Blayney
Mr I.M. Britza
Mr G.M. Castrilli
Mr V.A. Catania
Mr M.J. Cowper
Ms M.J. Davies

Mr J.H.D. Day
Ms W.M. Duncan
Ms E. Evangel
Mr J.M. Francis
Mrs G.J. Godfrey
Mr B.J. Grylls
Dr K.D. Hames
Mrs L.M. Harvey
Mr C.D. Hatton

Dr G.G. Jacobs
Mr S.K. L'Estrange
Mr R.S. Love
Mr W.R. Marmion
Mr J.E. McGrath
Ms L. Mettam
Mr P.T. Miles
Ms A.R. Mitchell
Mr N.W. Morton

Dr M.D. Nahan
Mr D.C. Nalder
Mr J. Norberger
Mr D.T. Redman
Mr M.H. Taylor
Mr T.K. Waldron
Mr A. Krsticevic (*Teller*)

Question thus negatived.