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HEALTH SYSTEM — PLANS OF BARNETT GOVERNMENT

Matter of Public Interest

THE SPEAKER (Mr G.A. Woodhams): Today I received within the prescribed time a letter from the Leader of the Opposition in the following terms —

Dear Mr Speaker,

Matter of Public Interest

I wish to raise the following as a matter of public interest today, Thursday December 11, 2008.

“That the House call upon the Barnett Government to reveal its plans for the future of our health system and in particular:

- Joondalup Health Campus;
- Midland Hospital;
- Albany Hospital;
- Fiona Stanley Hospital; and
- the new Children’s Hospital.”

It is signed by the Leader of the Opposition. The matter appears to be in order and if at least five members will stand in support of the matter being discussed, it can proceed.

[At least five members rose in their places.]

The SPEAKER: The matter can proceed.

MR E.S. RIPPER (Belmont — Leader of the Opposition) [2.51 pm]: I move —

That the house call upon the Barnett government to reveal its plans for the future of our health system, and in particular Joondalup Health Campus, Midland hospital, Albany Regional Hospital, Fiona Stanley Hospital and the new children’s hospital.

This is a matter of accountability, but before I get to the specific accountability, I want to say that the Premier is clearly very irritated, very angry, that the house has come back to sit today. He is not interested in the fact that the executive is accountable to the Parliament. He has clearly decided in his anger, in his petulance, to come in this place and adopt the strategy of not answering questions. Therefore, faced with a basic question of the propriety of the actions of the member for Scarborough, who has form on this very issue, the Premier scoffs at the question, refuses to consider the question of standards in this government, tries to dismiss it by a reference to the name of the company involved, and absolutely refuses to deal with the issue—a disgraceful abdication of his responsibility as Premier.

Again, as another example of the failure of accountability, the Treasurer, knowing that he has costed a program of assistance to seniors on the basis of a low take-up rate —

Point of Order

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: I have listened very carefully to the Leader of the Opposition and the relevance to standing orders —

Mr J.N. Hyde: Which number?

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: When did you become Speaker?

The SPEAKER: Order, member for Perth!

Several members interjected.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: So far, the Leader of the Opposition has not said one word in relation to the motion that he has moved—not one word. His comments so far have had no relevance to the motion—none at all.

Mr E.S. RIPPER: On that point of order, Mr Speaker, I know that the Leader of the House has trouble following an argument but the issue is that this is a question of accountability. We have had several examples of the government refusing to accept accountability today as a result of irritation. I wanted to canvass a couple of those examples and then move on to the next example, which is the reason I moved my motion.

The SPEAKER: Please move on.

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Debate Resumed

Mr E.S. RIPPER: The other example that I wanted to mention very briefly is that the Treasurer has clearly saved money by requiring seniors to undertake a convoluted application process before they get the rebate. We asked a simple question: what was the costing assumption for the take-up rate? Did the government expect 30 per cent, 40 per cent, 10 per cent or 60 per cent of seniors to receive this rebate? It was a simple enough question, and I would have thought that the Treasurer, if he was on top of his portfolio, could answer it. The other issue that the Treasurer was unaccountable on —

Mr C.J. Barnett interjected.

Mr E.S. RIPPER: Perhaps the Premier will do star jumps shortly. He should just calm down and listen to the argument.

The other issue on which the Treasurer was unaccountable was simply the question of how much support this government will give the community of Western Australia in the face of rising electricity charges. It is quite illustrative that the Treasurer failed to deal with that point. I now move to the specific issue of accountability. The Premier is apparently briefing the media that the opposition should not have moved this MPI, because the Minister for Health is not here. It is not the opposition's doing that the Minister for Health is not here. Nevertheless, it is important that this motion be moved because we know that the Premier, by reason of the very long batting tail in his government, dominates the government, and he will have the final call on these promises, and the Treasurer will have a particular say. I am sure that the Minister for Health would like to achieve every hospital promise and more. The question is whether he will be allowed to do so by the Premier and the Treasurer.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Can I ask you a question?

Mr E.S. RIPPER: No, I am asking questions of the Premier today, and I will allow him an interjection in due course.

Mr C.J. Barnett: I'm going to make a phone call.

Mr E.S. RIPPER: The Premier is going to take a phone call. He is going to walk out of the chamber during an MPI and take a phone call. What petulance! What an amazing performance from the Premier.

Mr J.N. Hyde: He spat the dummy!

Mr E.S. RIPPER: He has spat the dummy. Did the member for Perth catch it? Did it arrive over there, or did it hit the stained glass windows behind us? What an appalling performance!

I want to come to the first promise by the government. It promised to support the relocation and rebuilding of Princess Margaret Hospital for Children at the Queen Elizabeth II Medical Centre site as a public-private partnership. That was a Liberal health promise. The promise was that a completed, new PMH would be operational in 2014, with the cost of building it borne by the private sector. In its costings, the government allocated \$8 million for an \$800 million project. It has now backed away from the idea that it would be done as a PPP, and has told the house that it will be done in the traditional manner. Since the Premier has spat the dummy and will not participate in parliamentary debate because he is so petulant about the recall of the house, I ask the Treasurer whether the government is still committed to a completed Princess Margaret Hospital for Children, operational in 2014. Is that still a government promise?

Mr T.R. Buswell: When you're finished—hopefully you won't go on too long—I'll pop up and have a say.

Mr E.S. RIPPER: Will the Treasurer answer that question?

The Premier demands that I take an interjection, but storms out before I can do so. I give the Treasurer an opportunity to interject, and he says, "No thanks; I'll answer you later". He will not actually answer us later—that is the issue.

Mr R.H. Cook: Is the Premier coming back?

Mr E.S. RIPPER: Is the Premier coming back? Where is the Premier?

The government's program also included a commitment to build the new Albany Regional Hospital in one stage by 2012. Is the Treasurer still committed to building the Albany hospital in one stage by 2012?

Mr T.R. Buswell: When you've finished, I'll hop up and have my say.

Mr E.S. RIPPER: Will the Treasurer answer the question?

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Mr T.R. Buswell: Yes, when you've finished.

Mr E.S. RIPPER: With reference to the position of the government, the Minister for Health said, in the Address-in-Reply debate on 12 November —

This government supports the recommendations of the Reid review, other than the closure of Royal Perth Hospital.

The Premier has come back into the chamber. Can the Premier confirm—he wanted to make an interjection—that he will complete the new Princess Margaret Hospital and have it operational in 2014?

Mr C.J. Barnett: I did seek to make an interjection before, because —

Mr E.S. RIPPER: I am giving the Premier an opportunity for one right now.

Mr C.J. Barnett: The reason I sought to make an interjection is that the Leader of the Opposition made some claim that I had somehow briefed the media that he should not be doing this MPI. I do not recall doing that. What I do recall is that the Leader of the Opposition had one of his staff members spy on a media conference. Does the Leader of the Opposition do that regularly?

Mr E.S. RIPPER: What an extraordinary allegation! I would have thought a press conference was a public event!

Mr C.J. Barnett: Masquerading as a journalist! That is what he was doing—masquerading!

Mr E.S. RIPPER: I ask the Premier—do not avoid the question—will the Premier have Princess Margaret Hospital operational in 2014?

Mr C.J. Barnett interjected.

Mr E.S. RIPPER: The Premier has no courage and no accountability, and tries to evade the issue—a joke of a Premier, it would appear.

Mr C.J. Barnett interjected.

Mr E.S. RIPPER: Mr Speaker, if I may be permitted to have my say at the microphone, the Minister for Health said on Wednesday, 5 November —

Point of Order

Mr M. McGOWAN: Mr Speaker, I would actually like to hear the Leader of the Opposition. The Premier keeps interjecting and using unparliamentary terms like “sleazy” to describe the Leader of the Opposition. I would ask him, first, to stop interjecting; and, secondly, to stop using unparliamentary terms and withdraw.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members, the Premier sought to make an interjection. Maybe the interjection was a little overwhelming. Maybe there is too much interjection in this place. Maybe the problem is the fact that we might be here for the last day this year. I expressed the hope last Thursday that last Thursday would be the last day. Obviously we are back here for another day. Everyone is probably slightly celebratory about that—perhaps the Premier is; perhaps the Leader of the Opposition is. I do take the point from the member for Rockingham that he is interested in hearing some of the answers to the questions that the Leader of the Opposition is asking. I urge the Leader of the Opposition not to seek interjections so often.

Debate Resumed

Mr E.S. RIPPER: Mr Speaker, in the spirit of parliamentary debate, I was responding to the Premier's request to make an interjection. He does not take them himself at question time, but he did request to make one. I ask the Premier to respond seriously in this debate and tell us—not by way of interjection, but by getting to his feet—clearly and concisely, and we will listen: will he complete PMH and have it operational in 2014? The second question is: is the Premier still committed to opening a new state-of-the-art metropolitan general hospital in Midland by 2014? I want to know about PMH, and I want to know about the new general hospital at Midland. The Minister for Health said on 5 November that he was committed to those projects. I want to know whether, as a result of the Treasurer's review of the capital works program, the Premier is still committed to that. Finally, in the spirit of accountability—which the Premier seems reluctant to accept today—I ask: when is the government going to finalise the contractual arrangements for the expansion of Joondalup hospital? When is that going to happen? We know that that is a more than \$200 million project. The people of the northern suburbs have been waiting for that for months. If the Premier answers those questions, there will be a lot less heat in this house, and there will be a lot less difficulty for the Premier with regard to interjections and cross-interjections. It is very

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simple. It is a matter of accountability. Is the government still committed to those projects as previously announced?

MR R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [3.04 pm]: I support the motion. The Leader of the Opposition raised some very important points in his contribution to this debate. Governments have a responsibility to respond to the promises they have made to the electorate and to explain how they will carry out those promises. The Leader of the Opposition was correct when he observed that this matter involves a question of accountability. A pattern is emerging of this government deceiving the people of Western Australia about how it is going to meet its obligations and the promises that it made in the run-up to the election. A pattern is also emerging of policy being made on the run. Nuances and ideas have sprung to the minds of government members, but, quite frankly, the government has not yet explained how it will meet its obligations.

The government is committed to the outcomes of the Reid review. In addition, it wants to take some new ideas forward, but at this stage it is yet to explain how it will meet those commitments. One of those commitments was to do everything that Labor had committed to in health reform. If the Liberal government has said that it is going to do everything that Labor committed to, it must understand that it is taking on a big obligation. In health, it is taking on a \$5 billion hospital rebuild program. It is committed to the redevelopment of the Joondalup Health Campus. It also needs the capacity to recruit more than 2 600 nurses and 1 000 doctors into the system.

The Minister for Health said that the government is committed to everything that Labor had committed to, particularly under the Reid review, except for one important difference—that is, the government wants to remodel, reshape and rebuild Royal Perth Hospital at a cost of roughly \$600 million. It is not what has been said by the government both before and after the election that is of greatest concern to members on this side of the chamber and the people of Western Australia, but what has not been said. The restoration of Royal Perth Hospital represents a real threat to other hospitals and health services in the metropolitan area. As I have said before, the Labor Party is not anti-Royal Perth Hospital—we are pro-Fiona Stanley Hospital, pro-Joondalup Health Campus and pro-Swan District Hospital. We want hospital services to be rolled out in the regions and suburbs in which people live.

The government has committed to building Fiona Stanley Hospital, but a question remains about its commitment to that project. The government's own policy statement states that under the Liberal Party plan, Royal Perth Hospital will remain Western Australia's major trauma centre. The government cannot have its cake and eat it too. It cannot say that it is committed to a major state trauma centre at Fiona Stanley Hospital but will also have a major trauma centre at Royal Perth Hospital. It cannot have it both ways. Clinicians and hospital administrators believe that it cannot have it both ways. The only thing the government has not said is what will happen to Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital at the QEII Medical Centre site. The danger of the Liberal government's health agenda is not in what is being said but in what is not being said.

The government is committed to the redevelopment of Princess Margaret Hospital for Children, which would see the hospital operational on a new health campus by 2014. This project was to be substantially undertaken under a public-private partnership, but the government has now admitted that there is a big question mark over that. However, it has refused to provide answers to the people of Western Australia on how it will meet its commitment for the redeveloped Princess Margaret Hospital to be operational by 2014 when this redevelopment may not be done under a PPP. The government probably thought that it might be able to do this off balance sheet and slip it through, but at the end of the day it has a real obligation to explain to the people of Western Australia how it will undertake this process and have the hospital operational by 2014. We do not know the details of this project. We have a right to know what is going on. The government must tell us how it will meet these commitments.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: For about five minutes, I was under the impression that we were making some progress on this matter of public interest motion. I urge members on both sides of the house to allow the member for Kwinana to continue.

Mr R.H. COOK: Of course, it is easy to commit to large iconic projects such as Fiona Stanley Hospital. However, the Reid review was always committed to a particular operating model; namely —

... four hospitals around the metropolitan area should be expanded to accommodate additional capacity and complexity to improve community access to hospital care and to accommodate Western Australia's population growth and changing demographics. The four hospitals to be involved are Rockingham/Kwinana District, Joondalup Health Campus, Swan District and Armadale Kelmscott Memorial Hospitals.

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A lot of the argument about the Royal Perth Hospital site was pitched at people in the eastern suburbs. However, I would like the government to comment on—I think the people of Western Australia have a right to know—what is going to happen to Swan District Hospital health campus. What is going to happen to a development that at this stage, when compared with other developments, is in its infancy?

It beggars belief that the government will support a rebuild of Royal Perth Hospital at a cost of \$600 million and not support the Swan District Hospital redevelopment. The government has already admitted that Royal Perth Hospital will substantially pitch to, and provide substantial services to, people in the Swan District area. Every new brick for Royal Perth Hospital is a nail in the coffin of the Swan District Hospital redevelopment. I simply ask: is the government committed to the redevelopment of Swan District Hospital? The people in the area have a right to know.

The news about country health services is not so crash hot. The Liberal Party has committed to rebuilding the Albany Regional Hospital in its first term of government. We have a right to know where the resources for that rebuild will come from. In answer to a question on Joondalup Health Campus, the Treasurer recently said that the government is undertaking proper processes; it will keep the people around the Joondalup Health Campus dangling while the careful processes of government consider how the Joondalup Health Campus will be developed. However, no such rules apply when it comes to the redevelopment of the Busselton hospital. The government leaps straight into action and makes a unilateral decision that it will proceed with the Busselton hospital redevelopment on the old Busselton Regional Hospital site—with not so much as a traffic management report, an environmental report or a business case. When it comes to the Treasurer's pet project, the government simply goes ahead and makes a commitment, but when it comes to the Joondalup Health Campus, it is strangely careful, considered and somewhat cautious.

The government has committed to Labor's health plan plus one—plus Royal Perth Hospital. The people of Western Australia, who endorsed that commitment, now demand that the government move forward. We want to know how the government will do that. However, here are other unanswered questions. The government has to explain how it will role out its health promises to the people of Western Australia at Joondalup Health Campus, Fiona Stanley Hospital, in particular at Swan District Hospital, and at Albany hospital. The government has also to explain how it will redevelop Princess Margaret Hospital for Children by 2014. These are questions that the public deserves answers to.

MR A.P. O'GORMAN (Joondalup) [3.13 pm]: Today we saw this Premier's arrogance when we raised the issue of health services in Western Australia.

A member interjected.

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: Does the member opposite want to shut up for just one minute? This is his hospital we are fighting for, and he is not even supporting us in the fight—he will go against this! How dare he not support the Joondalup Health Campus!

Several members interjected.

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: Be quiet! We have seen the evidence. The Premier walked out when this issue was first mentioned. This is what the government thinks about health in this state. This is what it thinks of the Joondalup Health Campus and the people of Joondalup. The Premier gets up and walks out! The Treasurer is hauling tightly on the purse strings, yet we know how much the redevelopment of Joondalup will cost—\$231 million; the Treasurer just has to sign it up!

Mr T.R. Buswell interjected.

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: Two hundred and thirty-one million dollars. Is the Premier going to give us the extra beds? Is he going to increase the number of beds from 280 to 451? Is he going to expand the chemotherapy unit and increase the number of oncology beds? I need answers from the Premier on this matter. Is the Premier going to expand the emergency department by increasing the number of beds from 29 to 56, along with the new mental health facility in the emergency department?

A member interjected.

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: I thoroughly support it. Is the Premier going to give us a significant increase in surgical capacity from six operating theatres to 11? Is he going to give us the extra neonatal beds that were promised? Is he going to give us the extra rehabilitation beds and palliative care beds, and also increased dialysis services? We need answers from the Premier, not his arrogance such as when he stands and walks out when issues are raised. Never have I previously seen that in this place when a matter of public interest has been debated—never! The arrogance of this government and the pomposity of the Premier are disgraceful. I invite members on the other

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side whose electorates are in the northern suburbs to support us. The member for Hillarys is not even in the chamber listening to this debate. I invite the members for Kingsley, Ocean Reef and Wanneroo to stand up and support us, so that the Joondalup Health Campus will have increased services and an increased number of beds. There should be an announcement before Christmas. The government should stop dawdling. Every extra month that it takes is costing an extra \$1.8 million. By the time the government gets around to making a decision, it will say that it does not have the money. Therefore, those members opposite need to vote with us on this issue, not against us.

MR P.B. WATSON (Albany) [3.16 pm]: Mr Speaker —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Eyre!

Mr P.B. WATSON: I am going to talk about Albany Regional Hospital and the situation in Albany.

Mr C.J. Barnett: How much did you do? You were in government for eight years.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Yes; fair enough. If the Premier lets me speak, I will tell him. I applaud the fact that we are getting a new hospital in Albany. I applaud the Liberal Party —

Dr G.G. Jacobs interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Eyre!

Mr P.B. WATSON: Would the member just listen? I applaud the Liberal Party. Both parties went to the election on the same promise.

Mr C.J. Barnett: You went on it repeatedly. You went on it in 2001, 2005 and 2008.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Mr Speaker, could I have your protection, please?

The SPEAKER: Premier!

Mr P.B. WATSON: In 2005 we went to the election promising an upgrade of \$26 million.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Probably to the surprise of some members, I would like to hear the member for Albany continue. I have an interest in the questions he is asking and the comments he is making. I would like to be able to hear the member for Albany in relative silence.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Because your parents use Albany Regional Hospital, I am sure that you are just as keen to know about it, too.

In 2005 we went to the election and said that we would upgrade the hospital at a cost of \$26 million. A report was done by the Department of Health; it took about two years. Maybe it is my fault, as the local member, that I did not chase it up more.

Mr C.J. Barnett: You had four years to chase it up.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Fair enough. We on this side take the blame. We did not deliver on that promise. Coming up to the last election, we offered \$100 million —

Dr G.G. Jacobs: It is your shame. What did you do for your hospital in Albany?

Mr P.B. WATSON: After seeing the Minister for Water's performance in Parliament, I do not think he should be talking about anyone not delivering.

Dr G.G. Jacobs interjected.

Mr P.B. WATSON: He can keep going, because he is helping me. One of our old posties was too slow to be a drip, so we called him "Splash", and I think the member for Eyre fits that description very well. With Albany Regional Hospital —

Mr T.R. Buswell: What a thunderbolt!

Mr P.B. WATSON: Do not let me start on the Treasurer or we will be here all day!

Both parties went to the election with promises about Albany Regional Hospital. We promised \$100 million for the first stage of the hospital, which was to be started in October. The Liberal Party promised—there were headlines all over Albany—\$135 million over four years. Everyone knew that it would not be done for \$135 million. I have now heard through my network at the hospital that it will be close to \$200 million. The

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Liberal Party went to the election knowing that it would not be \$135 million. We have kept all the posters, all the letters and everything like that that the Liberal Party sent out, and we will be reminding the people of Albany of what the Liberal Party promised and what it is going to deliver. If the Liberal Party delivers the hospital, I will shake the hand of Colin Barnett at the top of York Street. As members of Parliament we are here to get things done for our electorate. If I can do that, that is great. If the Liberal and National Parties can deliver the hospital, I will be happy. As the member for Albany, I say that if the Liberal Party can deliver, I will applaud it and the National Party.

The speed at which things are done is important. A lot of city members can talk about the patient assisted travel scheme, but I am sure that some regional members opposite know that if a pensioner from Albany makes a PATS claim for \$120 to \$150, it takes six to eight weeks before he or she gets the money. That is an absolute disgrace. I do not care whether it is the fault of the previous government or of this government; it should never happen. We cannot provide multitudes of facilities in regional areas. Unlike people who live in the city, if we cannot get into one hospital, we cannot go to a hospital in the next suburb. If my constituents who live, say, 80 kilometres out of town cannot be seen at Albany Regional Hospital, they have to fly or drive to Perth. At the moment, people who come to Perth for medical reasons cannot get cheap accommodation as they used to. The Liberal Party has offered more money for the PAT scheme, and I applaud that.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Thank you.

Mr P.B. WATSON: However, that must be fast-forwarded because if it takes six to eight weeks —

Dr M.D. Nahan: We are building the hospital and funding the PAT scheme and you are applauding us now.

Mr P.B. WATSON: I have; is the member listening?

Dr M.D. Nahan: Why don't you come over to this side?

Several members interjected.

Mr P.B. WATSON: If the member for Riverton was listening to what I was saying, he would have heard me say that I applauded the National Party. I am not like him, I represent my constituents, not the Liberal, Labor or National Parties. I am the member for Albany; I look after my constituents. When the member for Riverton gets up to talk about his electorate, he talks about himself, as does the other member who is interjecting. Country members are not in safe seats, as are members opposite; we have to work for a living.

Several members interjected.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Can we get a translator for the backbench over there?

I fully support the Liberal Party in building a new Albany Regional Hospital, but I want it to be built a bit sooner because it is something we very badly need in our electorate.

MR C.J. BARNETT (Cottesloe — Premier) [3.22 pm]: In 1873, Jules Verne wrote a classic novel, *Around the World in 80 Days*. Do members know how the people he wrote about travelled? They did it in hot-air balloons and clapped-out wagons, but they got around the world in 80 days. Today is day 80 of the Liberal-National government. We may not have gone around the world, but we are committed to building a new Kalgoorlie Regional Hospital; we have improved the patient assisted travel scheme; we have lifted the ban on uranium mining; we are building the Muchea saleyards; we fixed the teachers' dispute; and we have solved the health workers' issue. The list goes on and on: 80 days of achievement, compared with the Jules Verne clapped-out hot-air balloon and clapped-out wagon that is the Labor Party. This is day 80.

What does this motion say? Members opposite have been working on this for a whole week. This is the reason we have all come back—some of us have flown back from around the state. This is what it is all about on day 80; this is why we have come back. This is it. We have been asked the question about the sandcastle. We have the superfluous amendment to the sentencing legislation to deal with, and although we have been here an hour and a half, we have not yet dealt with that. This is an exercise to justify the Assembly's sitting to deal with a frivolous, superfluous amendment to the truth-in-sentencing legislation. It is an absolute disgrace that has been put forward by a disgraced former Attorney General who, in 2003, failed the people of this state with that law. He recognised the problem, yet for five years he failed to correct it. This return of Parliament today is a sham; it is an effort to show that the former Attorney General has some credibility. The Leader of the Opposition should know better. As a former Treasurer, perhaps he can tell me how many thousands of dollars this farce is costing. Does the Treasurer have any idea?

Mr E.S. Ripper: We are doing what we are paid to do.

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Mr C.J. BARNETT: Are we paid to do this? I can tell him right now that members on this side of the house would rather be in their electorates representing their constituents and working on issues. That is what we are paid to do—not to come in here. We are paid to work on policy in government and work, first, in our electorates. That is what we are paid to do.

Point of Order

Mr E.S. RIPPER: The Premier, having developed some of his argument, should now address the question that has been put to the house by the opposition.

The SPEAKER: I am sure that the Premier is moving towards that.

Debate Resumed

Mr C.J. BARNETT: This is what the Labor Party thinks this is about: it thinks that we should spend thousands of dollars on returning to this Parliament, thus ignoring our electorates and missing school visits, including graduation ceremonies. This is the opposition’s attitude towards the community. Why are we back here? We are back here ostensibly to add superfluous words to a piece of legislation to create a pretence that somehow the former Attorney General has corrected the mess that he left the justice system in. This is about the former Attorney General trying to save face, and the Leader of the Opposition has gone along with it. He is culpable for this farce today. This motion is an attempt to justify members returning to this house from all over the state, thus having to cancel community events, thereby disappointing schoolchildren and schools by not presenting school awards and prizes. That illustrates the opposition’s attitude towards the community. The opposition thinks that this issue is crushingly important.

Mr A.P. O’Gorman interjected.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: We did not hear from the member for Joondalup for eight years and finally he has popped up. We never heard from him previously.

The motion asks this house to call upon the Barnett government to reveal its plans for the future of our health system, and then it lists some hospitals—Joondalup Health Campus, Midland hospital, Albany hospital, Fiona Stanley Hospital and the new children’s hospital.

Dr G.G. Jacobs: What about Kalgoorlie?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Exactly. Why is Kalgoorlie not on the list? Why was that hospital left out? Did the former Minister for Health and the new shadow Minister for Health forget about Kalgoorlie? Have members opposite been to Kalgoorlie? Have they seen the state of the Kalgoorlie hospital? Why was that hospital not on the list?

Mr E.S. Ripper: Because you have announced it.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: My mistake. My apologies; sorry. We have announced it, and construction will start in a matter of weeks. Sorry, we have announced it and, sorry, obviously it was my mistake. This is actually day 80 of this government’s being in office, and that has been pretty quick. How long did the opposition, when in government, spend on the Kalgoorlie project? I remember the former member for Kalgoorlie, Matt Birney, coming into this place as a new member in 2001 and saying that he had been elected as the first Liberal member for Kalgoorlie and he supported the Labor Party in its commitment to a new hospital in Kalgoorlie. He was re-elected in 2005, supporting a new Kalgoorlie hospital, which the Labor Party also supported. Did it happen? No, it did not happen. They forgot about Kalgoorlie in 2005, they forgot about Kalgoorlie in 2008 and they even forgot about Kalgoorlie in the motion that they have been working on for a week. They could not even think of Kalgoorlie today and put it on their list. That is the Labor Party’s attitude towards Kalgoorlie.

Another hospital is missing—Royal Perth Hospital. That hospital was left off the list. Why did the opposition do that? Does the member for Perth support Royal Perth Hospital?

Mr J.N. Hyde: We did.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: No, no. Who supports it? Do members on this side support Royal Perth?

Government members: Yes.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: We on this side support Royal Perth, but the member for Perth does not. We support Royal Perth Hospital and we want to retain it as a trauma hospital. Why? Because every city needs a central CBD trauma hospital. Members opposite should look at the people who use Royal Perth Hospital. Many of them are elderly and many of them are on low incomes. Large numbers of Aboriginal families go there. The people who can get there often are on low incomes and from disadvantaged backgrounds. Large numbers of people with mental health problems and elderly and lonely people go to Royal Perth.

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Mr J.N. Hyde interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, member for Perth! I realise that the member was given an opportunity a moment ago to interject, but I do not believe he has been given further opportunities to interject. I appreciate his enthusiasm and his closeness to the subject. I would like to hear the Premier.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The plan of the Labor Party, which has forgotten Kalgoorlie Regional and Royal Perth Hospitals and which purports to represent the disadvantaged in our community—some members are genuine in that—ignores the large number of people who use Royal Perth Hospital. What will they do? Will they get in a taxi and go to Nedlands? Can members see that happening? Will they get on the new train and go to Murdoch? Can members see that happening? During the election campaign I visited those elderly people in their 80s and 90s with cardiac and respiratory problems who were hooked up to machines in Royal Perth. They should not have been there in a sense. It was high care.

Mr R.H. Cook interjected.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The member needs to learn; he could be a good member of Parliament if he listened.

Mr R.H. Cook interjected.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: No; listen.

The reason those people are in that hospital is that they have nowhere else to go and have no-one to care for them, yet the Labor Party is going to tell them to get in a taxi and go to Nedlands or to get on the flash new train and go to Murdoch. Members opposite have no compassion; they are not genuine about the disadvantaged. They are more interested in their electoral prospects than they are in the welfare of the most disadvantaged people in our community. I can tell members right now that this Liberal-National government will not ignore the social justice of the disadvantaged people of this state. We will not ignore those people.

Many people on this side of the chamber want to speak on this matter. It is not that they came here to speak; they just want to fill up the next 22 minutes so that we can get on to the reason that we are here—the five-minute exercise of making a frivolous amendment to the truth-in-sentencing bill.

We also heard an extraordinary admission from the member for Albany, who has now left the chamber. The member made the comment in his address that, at the 2005 election, he and Labor committed to a \$26 million upgrade to Albany Regional Hospital. It has not happened. What was his comment today? This may not be word perfect, but he said, “Okay; I didn’t chase it up.” When in the four years did he not chase it up? He had four years and he did not find the time to chase it up! This is the hardworking member for Albany, who did not find time in four years to chase it up. What a farce!

We will reveal our plans for hospitals—as we have done with Kalgoorlie—one by one as we do the work, as we review the work that has been done and as we make responsible decisions for this state.

Members opposite mentioned Joondalup hospital. A redevelopment is planned for Joondalup, from 284 to 471 beds. That hospital will be built by the Liberal government. The plan for the Midland health campus at the new site on Clayton Street is for a 321-bed facility. We will do the Albany hospital project. Can someone tell me what is at Fiona Stanley Hospital today?

Mr J.M. Francis: It is just an empty block of land with bulldozers on it still.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Are there any signs?

A government member: Big signs.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Fiona Stanley Hospital is on the way. Have the trees been levelled?

Mr J.M. Francis: They have levelled the trees.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The trees have been taken out. Well done; congratulations! After eight years, a few trees have been taken off the block of land. There is no concrete, there are no roads, and there are no patients, doctors or nurses. It is a typical Labor Party hospital—nothing.

Yes, we have plans for a new children’s hospital on the QEII site, and we have plans for a new women’s hospital to be co-located with access to trauma. We will retain Royal Perth Hospital as a central business district hospital. As I have said, we have already done Kalgoorlie. As I have said, it has been 80 days since we were elected. Kalgoorlie will go into construction in the next few weeks—maybe even before the end of the year, with some initial outside connections for sewerage and the like. That is underway. Around the world in 80 days. Jules Verne may have written science fiction and fantasy, but he would not believe that mob opposite!

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MRS M.H. ROBERTS (Midland) [3.34 pm]: I am somewhat disappointed with the Leader of the Opposition's belligerent response —

Several members interjected.

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: Mr Speaker, that was, of course, a slip of the tongue, and I am disappointed that you did not call the house to order as you do when I interject.

The Premier's response today was belligerent. He complained about having to come back to Parliament for one day, after he has had months off. He was slow to come back to Parliament, and there have been fewer parliamentary sittings this year than in any year I can recall.

Several members interjected.

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: The government decided that Parliament would sit for only three weeks after September, and now it complains about having to come to work for one day. We then had a belligerent response and carry-on from the Premier about this motion. This is a serious issue for people living in the eastern metropolitan region in Midland, Kalamunda, the hills, the Swan Valley, Gidgegannup and Ellenbrook, and in the agricultural region extending to the wheatbelt. They are very concerned about the future of the new Midland health campus. We seem to have a Premier who is not even aware of the commitment that his health minister has already made to construct the Midland health campus. I would have thought —

Mr C.J. Barnett interjected.

Point of Order

Mr M. McGOWAN: Mr Speaker, the member has five more minutes in which to speak, and all I can hear is loud and belligerent commentary from the Premier. I ask that the Premier let members speak, to say what they want to say, and that he retain a little dignity and remain silent.

The SPEAKER: Before the member for Midland resumes speaking, I believe that I earlier reinforced the point made by the member for Rockingham. I know that members on both sides are anxious to get out of this place, and I certainly respect the points made by the member for Rockingham. I ask members on both sides of the house to respect other members, no matter what their point of view, even though it may not coincide with their views.

Debate Resumed

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: If the Premier took this issue seriously, he would have done a little research. Had he done that research, despite the fact that the Minister for Health is not in the chamber, he might have discovered the speech given by the Minister for Health in my electorate a few weeks ago. He might have had a look at the media statement released by the Minister for Health on 5 November. It states in part —

“The Liberal-National Government is committed to opening a new state-of-the-art Metropolitan General Hospital at Midland by 2014 ...

If we had a statesman for a Premier, he would today have reaffirmed the government's commitment to the hospital in Midland, and to completion of the hospital by 2014. Why would he not say that? That is the crux of this issue. Is it because he is ill-informed? Is it because he will not do the research? Is it because he is merely treating the Parliament with contempt? I do not know. Does the Premier have another agenda? Is he not committed? Will he not personally give the same commitment that his Minister for Health has already given?

Mr C.J. Barnett: The health minister is not here. He is not here.

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: Does the Premier stand by his commitment? The member for Cottesloe is the Premier: will he or will he not deliver on the government's commitment to construct the Midland health campus by 2014?

Mr C.J. Barnett: Ask the question of the health minister when he's here.

Mr J.N. Hyde: Are you the Premier or not?

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: Does the Premier support the commitment made by the Minister for Health?

The SPEAKER: In common with all members in this chamber, I am becoming a little tired of interjections. I earlier gave the member for Perth a clear indication of that when I was on my feet and speaking. I call the member for Perth to order for the first time.

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: Planning is going ahead for the hospital in Midland. I will attend a meeting in my electorate next Tuesday to continue the planning work for the hospital. The Minister for Health has made a commitment to the hospital, but I am very disappointed that the Premier will not today affirm his support for the

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commitment already made by the Minister for Health and reassure people in not only my electorate, but also the wheatbelt, the hills and the Swan Valley that this hospital will go ahead in 2014.

MR F. ALBAN (Swan Hills) [3.39 pm]: I live in the electorate of the member for Midland, so I am also concerned about the Swan District Hospital. I thought I would share some of my experiences out there. During the seven or eight years that the former government was in office, we heard about the Lloyd Street extension. In case members do not know what the Lloyd Street extension means, it means access to the area where the hospital is located. One year passed, two years passed, it was imminent, it was on the minister's desk, it was about to be answered and it was about to be done. Finally, not so long ago, while the Labor Party was in government, what happened to the Lloyd Street extension? The meat corporation owned some land where the Lloyd Street extension was meant to be, and the former state government sold it. The land set aside for access to the hospital is no longer available. We need to negotiate that land back so that the Lloyd Street extension, which forms a large part of the connecting roadwork to the hospital, can go ahead. There have been problems with the previous government. I do not want to hear any morals about what is happening to the Swan District Hospital.

MR T.R. BUSWELL (Vasse — Treasurer) [3.40 pm]: I want to make a couple of comments in contribution to this debate. I want to point out a very interesting fact to the member for Kwinana. I heard him say, "Don't you know that people with trauma go to hospitals in ambulances?" I want to give him one interesting example of a person with a trauma who did not go to hospital in an ambulance. Luke is the son-in-law of William Rowe, whom members would have seen in the newspapers recently. Luke had his jaw broken; it was smashed completely in half by a blow. He was admitted to the Geraldton Regional Hospital. He could not get access to the Royal Flying Doctor Service to bring him to Perth. His parents had to charter a plane to bring him to Perth. This happened under the previous government's health system that the member stands and defends. Luke landed at Perth Airport in a charter plane paid for by his own parents. Is that trauma? Does the member for Kwinana know how he got to the hospital? He took a taxi and he got in the queue in the hospital with everybody else. The member needs to understand the realities before he comes into this place and mutters stupid statements. His statement was not reflective of fact. That is one example of the problems that the people of this state endured under eight years of Labor government.

Mrs C.A. Martin interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members, I am usually someone who has an incredible amount of patience. I am running out of it very rapidly. I call the member for Kimberley to order.

Mrs C.A. Martin: Get the facts right. That's all I'll say.

The SPEAKER: I know that the member for Kimberley has come a long way to be here today. I would like her to stay in here and listen to the rest of the MPI. I call her to order for the second time.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: What are our plans for the health system of Western Australia? We plan to make it better, build hospitals, address the waitlist issue and address the issues in emergency departments. The member for Kwinana has the gall to criticise us for misleading the people of Western Australia. Was the Labor Party misleading the people of Western Australia in 2005 with its promise to build Fiona Stanley Hospital when it knew that it would barely turn a sod of soil in four years? All it managed to do, completely independently of the letting of a contract for construction, was to take that bit of the contract out so it could get a bulldozer on the site in the shadow of the state election so that the then Premier and the then Minister for Health could go out and look good. Was that being deceptive to the people of Western Australia?

Mr R.H. Cook interjected.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I will get to Princess Margaret Hospital for Children in a second. Was the former government deceptive to the people of Albany in 2005 to say that it would build them a new hospital when it had no intention of doing so? The same happened to the people of Kalgoorlie. The list goes on and on.

The member for Kwinana wants to talk about Princess Margaret Hospital. The former government promised to fix Princess Margaret Hospital. I toddled off and got the forward estimates. The former government said, "We'll fix Princess Margaret; don't worry about it." When was it going to fix Princess Margaret Hospital? It was going to spend the money in 2013-14. It was dreaming; it was in the never-never. It also said that it would fix Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital. When? In the same years—2014-15. This is how the Labor Party operated in government, and its members have the gall to come in here and speak in that way. The member for Joondalup should not worry because we will finish the work that the former government could not do. The sad thing is that the member for Joondalup comes into the house to speak on this matter, but the newly elected government members of the northern suburbs will deliver more to the people of Joondalup in three or four months than the former government delivered in eight years. When the Minister for Health goes there eventually to make the

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announcement, the people of Joondalup will all be standing around him, and the member for Joondalup will get an invitation. He can be like the member for Albany and stand behind the minister and pat him on the back and congratulate him on a job well done. The member for Joondalup will say, as the member for Albany did today, that maybe he could have worked harder for the people of his electorate. It will be a Liberal government that will deliver.

I want to touch on a couple more matters. We talk about health infrastructure with credibility because of what we delivered when we were last in government. People will remember that under the former Liberal government, the Joondalup Health Campus was delivered and the Peel Health Campus was delivered.

Several members interjected.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: That is interesting. Do members opposite think that the patients who turn up at the Peel Health Campus will say that it is a private hospital so they should be taken away? Will they say that even though they have had their legs sawn off in an accident, they will not go in there because it is a private hospital? A private hospital is awful, is it not? Will they say not to take them there and that they would rather die in the back of an ambulance? Yes, there was a private-public partnership to deliver quality health care to the people of Peel. If private hospitals are so bad, according to the member for Kimberley, why was the previous government negotiating with a private developer in Joondalup to continue the contract? What is the answer? Members opposite do not have one.

We delivered the South West Health Campus in Bunbury, the Northam Regional Hospital and the Armadale-Kelmscott Memorial Hospital health campus. When we talk about delivering health infrastructure, the people of Western Australia know that we speak as a government that comes with —

Several members interjected.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: — a strong record of delivering; we do not speak with forked tongue and it is not a matter of just standing up, as was done by the member for Joondalup and the member for Albany or the people who misrepresented the capacity to deliver the Fiona Stanley Hospital. We will deliver and we will implement our plans for a better health system in Western Australia.

DR G.G. JACOBS (Eyre — Minister for Mental Health) [3.48 pm]: Mr Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to talk and to elucidate some of the plans that we have in the health system for Western Australia. I will stick to the script of the motion. Members have listed various health campuses and hospitals. The member for Joondalup was quite concerned about the commitment to Joondalup Health Campus. I think I should elucidate the plan for the Joondalup hospital. The member talked about theatres and expanded emergency centres. The public redevelopment will include, and I quote, a new, expanded, stand-alone ED; additional beds; additional theatres; additional clinical and non-clinical support services; and additional essential works associated with other private licensing requirements. Therefore, we have a plan to move forward on the Joondalup Health Campus. It will go from 284 beds to 471 beds.

Mr P.B. Watson: I hope you are not reading that.

Dr G.G. JACOBS: I am quoting from the information I have been provided on the Joondalup Health Campus to reassure the member for Joondalup that these are the points of the plan. I see he is shaking his head in agreement. The Joondalup Health Campus' role —

Point of Order

Mr M. McGOWAN: Firstly, the Premier seems to be trying to interfere with the minister. Now he is directing someone else to interfere with the minister. Secondly, the minister was quoting from what seems to be an official document. I would ask that he table the document, as he mentioned just a moment ago that he was quoting from it.

The SPEAKER: On the first point, there is no point of order. On the second point, if it is an official document, I expect the minister to take the appropriate action.

Debate Resumed

Dr G.G. JACOBS: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I inform the member for Rockingham that these notes have been provided to me to make comments regarding this matter of public interest. I have had these notes prepared in response to some of these questions. If members want real answers given about the plans, members should expect some real answers to those questions that have been asked. I am providing them.

The member for Albany, very interestingly, made the point about Albany Regional Hospital. It was another one of the “moving the goalposts” plans for health that his side undertook when it was in government. It occurred at

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not only Albany Regional Hospital, but also Kalgoorlie Regional Hospital. It occurred at Esperance District Hospital and, as we have heard from the Treasurer, at Princess Margaret Hospital. That has been well documented in the Reid report. But what happened? The Reid report talked about co-locating Princess Margaret Hospital on the Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital site. What happened? The previous government procrastinated. It even questioned the site of Princess Margaret Hospital—delayed, delayed, delayed. Kalgoorlie Regional Hospital was said to be developed in 2001 with \$40 million. The former government sat on its hands for so long that all we got was promise after promise, but the hospital never actually happened.

When the member for Fremantle was the Minister for Health, he kept telling people in my electorate that the hospital was coming, and that it would be a regional resource centre to which we would refer critically ill patients who could not be treated in smaller hospitals. What happened to the resource centre? It was never developed. It was a lame excuse for doing nothing to the smaller peripheral hospitals: “We will not do anything for Esperance because you’re getting an upgrade at Kalgoorlie and you can send all your critical patients to Kalgoorlie.” What happened to Kalgoorlie? Nothing. What happened to Esperance? Nothing. It was just a lame excuse to play one off against the other and do nothing.

The member for Albany would like to say that we have not done anything. He did not do anything and, if he was such an active member, why did he not stand up for the people of Albany? How long does it take? He had at least four years, if not more —

Mr P.B. Watson interjected.

Dr G.G. JACOBS: Yes, and the then Premier went to Albany on the eve of the election and promised a hospital to try to get the member for Albany over the line!

Mr P.B. Watson: He did!

Dr G.G. JACOBS: He did by this much, a very small —

Mr M.P. Murray: He came from behind!

The SPEAKER: Order! I call to order the member for Collie-Preston and the member for Joondalup for the first time.

Dr G.G. JACOBS: I heard the member for Albany bemoaning the patient assisted travel scheme. As a medical practitioner for many years, I have to concede that there were some deficiencies in delivering transport for people to seek specialist consultation at a bigger centre, particularly in Perth. This government has made a commitment. I do not know where the member was when this announcement was made, but in fact the patient assisted travel scheme has been boosted. The current funding has been boosted by more than 50 per cent, or more than \$30 million, in recognition of the increase in the cost of living and increased transport costs, such as the price of petrol. Fortunately, the price of petrol has come down a little. Still, for country people, it is a significant cost. We will also simplify PATS and keep red tape to a minimum, because it is the red tape that the member referred to that is frustrating the process. We have gone some way to making it easier for country people. What has he done?

Mr P.B. Watson: What have you done?

Dr G.G. JACOBS: What has he done?

Mr P.B. Watson interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, member for Albany! I realise it is an engagement of sorts but I call the member for Albany to order for the first time.

Dr G.G. JACOBS: We have also increased the provision for air travel by reducing the minimum threshold from a 16-hour trip by road to four hours. That is a significant improvement for country people who need to access specialist consultation. We have also improved the process and reduced the red tape for accompanying carers and escorts; that is, family and friends who can go with the patient when they travel long distances. I think it is hypocritical for members opposite to say that we have no plan for health.

Point of Order

Mr M. McGOWAN: I refer to standing order 157. The member said in his address that he was quoting. He said, “I am quoting from the notes before me.” Standing order 157 states that if requested by another member, such a document, if it is an official document, will be tabled. I suppose this turns on the question of what is an official document. However, the member’s document has been prepared by government sources and the member said that he was quoting from it and he continued to quote from it, although not actually saying so, after I raised a

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point of order. However, I have now found the standing order, so in light of the fact that the notes the member was referring to were prepared by government and that the member admitted that he was quoting from those documents—the Premier obviously took objection to the member quoting from them because the Premier told him to stop saying that—I request that the member table those documents in accordance with standing order 157.

The SPEAKER: I am familiar with what the member is quoting from in the standing orders. With respect to standing order 157, I direct the minister that, if they are in fact official documents, to table them; however, if they are notes prepared to enable him to present his particular case and are not official notes, there is no such direction. If they are official government documents, the minister needs to table them.

Dr G.G. JACOBS: These notes were prepared by my staff; these are not official notes. I gave members the courtesy of saying that I was quoting from a bit of paper. It has “matter of public interest” written on it and it talks about the question. There are notes underneath that are in response to those questions, which have been prepared by my very competent staff.

Debate Resumed

MR J.M. FRANCIS (Jandakot) [3.57 pm]: Mr Speaker —

Mr P. Papalia: The rising star!

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: The rising star. Let me give members a quick lesson. Do members know why the people of Western Australia have such little respect for the members of this house and for politicians?

Several members interjected.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: No, because members opposite treat this place like *The Muppet Show*—absolutely! People in this place remember *The Muppet Show*. Do they know who the member for Mandurah and the member for Albany remind me of? Statler and Waldorf; the two old men who sat up in the gallery interjecting all the time. They opposed what the Muppets were doing, but they kept coming back every week for the best seats on their side of the house.

Several members interjected.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I will tell members that the most fascinating conversation in this house must have been the strategy meeting in the Leader of the Opposition’s office this morning. I bet the member for Kwinana was there saying, “But, Baldrick, I have a cunning plan. I have such a cunning plan that I’m going to trip them up —

Withdrawal of Remark

Mr M. McGOWAN: As the leader of government business kept saying earlier, members should be referred to by the name of their electorate or the position they hold in the house; other terms are not parliamentary. I ask the Speaker to ask the member for Jandakot to withdraw, as the Speaker requested the Leader of the Opposition to withdraw earlier today.

The SPEAKER: I think I correctly heard the member for Jandakot. He made an allusion, perhaps, to certain members in this place who reminded him of characters in a television program.

Mr J.M. Francis: That is correct.

The SPEAKER: That is the allusion that I would understand.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I think I mentioned the Muppets and Baldrick from *Blackadder*.

Debate Resumed

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: The member for Kwinana said that he had a cunning plan; he would arrange an MPI on the health portfolio when he knew that the minister was away. How great are members opposite? They say that they will try to trip the government up and talk about something when they know that the minister will not be here —

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan interjected.

The SPEAKER: The member for Armadale may not have been in the chamber before and may not have been listening to the monitor or watching this debate in her office, but there has been a tendency during the past 45 minutes towards continual interjections. I have advised members that, at this point, I will not tolerate much more.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: That brings me to the matter covered by this MPI. One of the issues the opposition has listed is that the house call upon the Barnett government to reveal its plan for the future of our health system, in particular the Fiona Stanley Hospital. Obviously, this is a matter dear to my heart, as that hospital is in my

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electorate. This is the most re-announced public policy in the history of this state. What a great move on the part of the previous government! How many times did the previous government re-announce the Fiona Stanley Hospital? Five times! In 2005 it said that the hospital would cost \$403 million, create 591 beds and be completed by 2010. In September 2005, four months later, it said that the project would cost \$742 million, consist of 610 beds, and be completed by 2011. In December 2006 the government said that it would cost \$1.09 billion, contain 643 beds, and be completed by 2012. In December 2007—this just keeps going—the project was said to cost \$1.761 billion for 643 beds and would be completed in 2013. Was the previous government ever going to do this? If an election had not been called, there would still be trees on the block. In April 2008—we can smell an election year coming up—the project is announced to cost \$1.761 billion and still contain 643 beds, but now it would not be finished until 2014. It is the most re-announced public project in the history of this state.

Not only that, a few little announcements were added along the way. I am happy to table this press release from the Minister for Health of the time, dated 11 July 2007. The government decided that it could not re-announce a new date, so, to drag it out a bit, it would let people go online and have their say. I would love to hear from the former Minister for Health how many people actually took up the recommendation in his press release. The press release reads —

Go online to have your say on design for flagship hospital

People in communities across Western Australia can help shape the design of the new \$1.1 billion Fiona Stanley Hospital following the release of an online community survey.

What a joke!

Aware of the time, we should have a quick look at hospital waiting lists for elective surgery in this state—what they were under the previous Liberal government, and what they got to under the Labor government. When the previous Liberal government left office in 2001, 18 926 people were waiting for elective surgery in Western Australia. How much had that government reduced the rate by the time it lost office in 2001? It was being reduced by 146 per month. What was it when the present government gained office? The reduction rate under the Labor government had gone down to 74 per month. There were still 6 200 people on waiting lists for elective surgery in Western Australia. It would have taken 15 years to finish.

MR J.N. HYDE (Perth) [4.03 pm]: The government has been given the chance today to prove that it has a plan for health in Western Australia. The government put out a document detailing its promises. It has been asked today for very simple things. The Premier said during the election campaign that the new Princess Margaret Hospital for Children would be operational in 2014. He has failed to tell us today that his plan includes that commitment to 2014. The government's document that was released during the election campaign stated that a new Albany Regional Hospital would be built in one stage by 2012. The Premier has been given constant opportunities today to commit to this house that, in 2012, a rebuilt, new, you-beaut Albany hospital will be operational in one stage. He had that chance today. He has been in government for 80 days. He has Fiona Stanley Hospital already paid for. What has he done in 80 days? He has watched the sand blow. He has watched the fence stay there while nothing happens. He has the funds now. The government has the ability to do things. In 80 days, the government has not lifted a finger on Fiona Stanley Hospital.

On Royal Perth Hospital, all the Premier has done is replicate the Labor Party's plan to rebuild Royal Perth on the north block site. We announced in May that Royal Perth Hospital would be retained. During our term in government, we rebuilt the Joondalup and Midland hospitals. There are 14 hospitals in regional Western Australia. We rebuilt the regional hospitals in Albany, Broome, Derby and Kununurra. Those hospitals, along with the new Fiona Stanley Hospital and the new children's hospital, will help take the pressure off the inner city Perth hospitals. One thousand people a week are moving to Perth. Many of those people will need hospitalisation. The government is using the smokescreen that it will rebuild a smaller Royal Perth Hospital. The government is expecting people to come into Perth—on overcrowded trains and buses—to an undersized Royal Perth Hospital, when it should be providing more funding for Joondalup and Rockingham hospitals and the hospitals in the bush. The government is expecting people in Dumbleyung, Dongolocking and Halls Creek to come into Perth for their health services, when they should be getting the health services they deserve in their own communities.

The government is creating a smokescreen about Royal Perth. Under Labor's plan, Royal Perth would have been a local hospital. The local people in the inner city want Royal Perth to be retained as a local hospital. The Premier is replicating exactly what Professor Reid said in his report should not be done. In planning to create two big edifices in the inner city, he is letting down the people in the outer suburban areas and the people in the bush. The Premier needs to deal with health in a whole-of-state context. That is what this MPI is all about. The Premier had the chance today to say to the people of Western Australia that he has a plan to deliver holistic

Extract from *Hansard*

[ASSEMBLY - Thursday, 11 December 2008]

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Speaker; Mr Eric Ripper; Mr Rob Johnson; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Colin Barnett; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Frank Alban; Mr Troy Buswell; Dr Graham Jacobs; Mr Joe Francis; Mr John Hyde

health to all Western Australians. However, he squibbed. The Treasurer said that he would not speak with a forked tongue. However, he made no commitments at all. The Treasurer is the man who holds the purse strings. The Premier is the Premier. Is this a document of truth? Will these commitments be delivered on? How will they be delivered on? That is what the Premier needs to answer. We have saved Royal Perth. The Premier needs to save the rest of the state.

Question put and passed.

The SPEAKER: Order! As I understand it, it is a tradition in this place that when the Speaker is on his feet, members remain where they are, and they remain silent. Let us celebrate today by listening to the Speaker in silence for a moment. I think there is general agreement that there will be no grievances today. Are there any 90-second statements?