

Crisis after crisis & leaders go AWOL

Ambulance ramping continues to set new records while hospitals are being held together by tape, with mushrooms growing on the ceiling and sewage running through surgery theatres, and now we learn their plan to manage the usual winter surge was released just three days before winter (*News*, 28/3).

Then we learn regional teachers are living in hotels and motels and over half of classes are being held in transportables, a situation that will be exacerbated by Roger Cook's poorly timed full-time kindy trial (*News*, 29/3).

As the heat rises in the kitchen and public outcry over their costly unwanted racetrack and rugby team increases, Roger the Dodger heads off to Canberra with a pack of ministers and advisers on a pointless mission to get Albo to change his mind about aged-care funding.

Meanwhile, Rita Saffioti is traipsing around Europe trying to arrange a soccer game (*News*, 28/3). Not only has our State Labor Government got its priorities wrong, but they go AWOL when the excreta hits the spinning blades.

Alan Freind, Leeming

Workers are out there

Premier Roger Cook has arrived back from Canberra after more chest-thumping over the aged-care crisis, only to be confronted by a \$1 billion request from aged-care providers to help keep elderly people from taking up too many beds in our hospitals (*News*, 28/8).

Ironically, as I write this letter, an old friend is reluctantly heading into hospital as he can no longer stay at home alone, but can not access a public nursing home for 18 months.

Meanwhile, we have 100,000



Roger Cook

qualified, caring — and surplus — nurses in Indonesia, including Bali, who could be deployed here as live-in carers today for our elderly, whilst simultaneously completing an upskilling qualification sponsored by our government.

It could be a win-win for both countries, and a huge win for our overcrowded hospitals and the elderly.

It is already happening now, with desperate families using foreign backpackers as de facto live-in carers to allow elderly parents to stay at home.

So why not formalise and expand this sensible and cost-effective scheme?

Ross Taylor, Claremont

Increase training here

It is interesting to learn from Suresh Rajan's letter (22/8) that roughly one-third of medical practitioners in WA gained their primary medical qualification outside Australia.

As he has pointed out, our health system would well have collapsed without them.

I am constantly reminded that, inter alia, a major reason for the health crisis in WA is that we are short of doctors in general and specialists in particular, even with the overseas-trained doctors.

Then, we have to ask a question, why are we so short of locally trained doctors?

Is it because we do not have

enough tertiary medical student places in Australia? Is it because it is more cost effective to poach doctors from overseas rather than training them here? Is it because Australians are not interested in pursuing a career in medicine?

Surely, an imperative and logical longer-term solution to alleviate the continuous health crisis in WA is to train more doctors in Australia, augmented by overseas-trained doctors.

Is my logic too simplistic?

Young Yoo, Leeming

Don't forget this largesse

It says a lot about the WA electorate's dissociation from contemporary politics when this State's Premier can empire build and expand his praetorian guard to the equivalent of 33 full-time staff, costing this State over \$8 million (*News*, 28/8).

Forget Colin Barnett's title of "emperor" — that pales into insignificance alongside Cook's bureaucracy.

The trouble is — and Cook and his ministers know this — people will read of this profligacy, turn the page, and will have forgotten about it in a matter of hours.

It's up to the Opposition to keep this financial scandal front and centre and then remind a fickle electorate of the Premier's self-indulgence during the next election campaign.

Roy Stall, Mt Claremont

Don't just talk soccer

We read that Rita Saffioti is on tour in Italy, begging Italian soccer clubs to take our millions (*News*, 28/8). While in Europe, could she ask if they have found a way to remove mushrooms from the ceiling of a "world class" hospital?

Dave Ford, South Perth

