

Arrogance astounding as Premier passes buck on hospitals

1 “Be humble, be respectful, and return the trust that the people of WA have placed in you.” They were the words of Roger Cook to his new Labor team following the election in March. What baloney. This week we’ve seen what the Premier really thinks and how he’s really treating West Australians. Anyone who takes any concerns about the state of our health system to the Premier should be taken seriously and treated with respect. I remind the Premier, prioritising the health of West Australians is not a stunt. His arrogance has been astounding.

2 There is no more important and fundamental responsibility of

BASIL ZEMPILAS



government than caring for sick, injured and dying people. Shadow health minister Libby Mettam and I have been inundated with calls and emails from people totally exasperated by their experiences, yet the Premier refuses to listen. He’s not listening to the experts or the frontline workers, and he’s certainly not listening to the patients and their families.

3 He’s not taking responsibility for this crisis, either. In February the Premier was blaming the lack of

GPs on Canberra. Now he’s blaming them for a lack of aged-care beds. Every month it’s a new excuse. For nine years there has been one constant which has led to the crisis in our hospital system: Roger Cook and WA Labor. This is on you, Premier.

4 I urge the Premier to make addressing the worsening hospital crisis his No. 1 priority — not train lines, soccer matches, film studios, public holidays or a racetrack nobody wants. Burswood looked illogical before, now it looks tone deaf and insensitive.

5 Ultimately this is the Premier’s responsibility, but questions need to be asked of Labor’s third health minister

in five years, Meredith Hammat also. Questions like: how often does the ministerial taskforce on ambulance ramping meet? When was the last meeting? Who attended? And is it true that despite record levels of ambulance ramping the taskforce only meets once a month?

6 While the ambulances ramp, the Premier is changing rules so his mates can get paid. Last week this column revealed former Labor minister Bill Johnson had been made president of the Burswood Park board. Now we learn Roger Cook has quietly changed the rules so former MPs on government boards can be paid six months after they leave

Parliament — not the 12 months Mark McGowan insisted on.

7 Well done, Hale School. Less smart phones, more engagement and conversations from the boys. Who would have thought.

8 I still can’t believe the Fever lost — and they had to play in Melbourne.

9 I’m thrilled AC Milan came to Perth, but why was Perth Glory their opponent and why was the match at NIB Stadium?

10 Good luck to Matthew Pavlich, he’s a surprise but sensible selection as Sydney Swans CEO.

Basil Zempilas is the State Opposition Leader