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# IN THE HOUSE



Premier Roger Cook waves his arms around defending WA's hospitals. Top left: Opposition Leader Basil Zempilas. Pictures: Justin Benson-Cooper

from the Opposition that the legislation was a "distraction tactic" a disgrace.

Asked whether the hospital system is, literally, falling apart, Mr Cook insisted the opposite was true.

"Our hospital system is performing extremely well," he said. "Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital is one of our heritage hospitals, it is older infrastructure . . . so, obviously, we need to continue to make sure we undertake the maintenance to ensure that it can provide quality health care and it does."

"We know our hospitals can continue to provide world-class health care through thick and thin, they continue to perform really well."

"In the case of Sir Charles

Gairdner Hospital — even throughout the reports of maintenance that have been highlighted in the media today — no procedures, no operations have been delayed or cancelled as a result."

Health Infrastructure Minister John Carey said all infrastructure concerns were taken "seriously" and there were "robust systems" to respond swiftly, blaming duplication for a tally of more than 1500 leaks.

But he confirmed 592 incidents were logged, including some damage that took almost 12 months to repair.

He said every Australian State was facing the same hospital pressures.

"We face extra pressures because of extraordinary population growth," he said. "We are taking

a number of initiatives now to provide relief to hospital capacity." Mr Carey said "radioactive waste" logged in one work order was a "false" report.

"It involved a non-hazardous water leak of a pipe which was repaired without further risk," he said.

Human excrement leaking into the Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital ICU was blamed on a patient flushing towels down toilets.

But a further 32 leaks were identified in intensive care, with one bed closed for five days as a result.

Mr Cook said "writing a cheque" would not eliminate all the health system's problems, and brushed off the suggestion \$217m — the amount allocated to the Burswood entertainment

precinct — would not hurt. But he agreed "ongoing" work is needed. "We continue to ensure that that particular piece of health infrastructure is up to standard and we continue to work hard in our health system to ensure we provide great health care," the Premier said.

He briefly stumbled, while searching his notes to find good news to report.

"That's the reason why we have the lowest, the best, sorry, that's the reason why we have the best ambulance response rates in the country," he said. "That's the reason why we are the top-performing State when it comes to the four-hour rule."

Record ambulance ramping, which past 7000 hours for the first time in July, prompted another question that was ignored.

"We know our hospitals can continue to provide world-class health care through thick and thin, through rain, hail and shine."

**WA Premier Roger Cook**

"They are putting people's lives at risk. I reckon \$217 million might make a reasonable difference to that ageing building."

**Opposition Leader Basil Zempilas**

"All of our hospitals, particularly where they are older, require ongoing maintenance. Now this . . . this is a matter that, for health service providers, they deal with as required and as necessary."

**Health Minister Meredith Hammat**

"We want the Premier to drop this world-class line. We want the Premier to acknowledge that there is a problem, that our hospitals are on their knees."

**Australian Medical Association WA president Dr Kyle Hoath**

"The radiation levels in these pipes were very low and may be zero. The Government is making serious investment, but it is to be expected every year you will have a number of work orders coming through."

**Health Infrastructure Minister John Carey**

"We've had mould with actual mushrooms growing out of our ceiling and in the actual main corridors. All the patients are, we're always telling them to, like, complain, complain, complain."

**Nurse Leanne on ABC Mornings yesterday**

Nurses and midwives — along with all hospital staff — deserve to work in an environment that is safe, well-maintained and supports the provision of high-quality care."

**Australian Nursing Federation WA secretary Romina Raschilla**



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