

Urgent fix calls for bipartisanship

WA Health director-general Shirley Bowen's comments that the health system is not coping are words indicating she is a worthy custodian of a difficult role and willing to courageously share her concerns with the community.

I would expect the article in the *The West* (News, 1/8) was endorsed by the Health Minister and an opportunity to find solutions that exclude political biases and interference as was my past experience working as a senior health executive (Ex CEO WA, Health, Ex CEO St John of God Hospital, Murdoch). Now I, retired, and together with colleagues both politicians and administrators over years past, should apologise for believing a new healthcare model was too difficult and recommendations from many expensive external consultants too drastic and political unpalatable.

No longer should this attitude be allowed to prevail.

Where to from here? There has to be a bipartisan agreement with both sides of the political fence becoming more humble and working together with none of the arrogance and slanging matches typical of what is reported at parliamentary debate and Question Time. Any body established to help gather information to the proposed future healthcare model should be overseen by an external independent chair with the majority of members selected from individuals with knowledge of healthcare delivery with consumer representation. Thank you again, Dr Shirley Bowen for helping to open the innings on this long overdue matter. Enough from the "Old School".
Glyn Palmer, Dunsborough

Hardly statesmanlike

Premier Roger Cook has labelled Opposition Leader



Health boss Shirley Bowen.

Basil Zempilas' letter to him about the health crisis as a "stunt". How dare you, Mr Cook? Your arrogance is unacceptable. Mr Zempilas has written to you as the Opposition Leader. You as the Premier of this State should read that letter and then respond courteously. You seem to have forgotten it is the voters in this State who have put you into office, and it will be the voters who throw you out if you continue to show such unrivalled arrogance and pass the buck as far as our very sick health system is concerned.

Shame on you, Mr Cook.

Gail Wright, Baldivis

Chance for the Liberals

With the health system in chaos and little or no resolution in sight from the Government, the Liberal Party has the opportunity to shine by coming up with a workable plan to fix the system. If successful, its opportunity to govern will be well favoured in the ballot boxes come the next election.

John Kilkenny, Brentwood

Just get on and do it

Premier Roger Cook, the public is not interested in your game of chicken with the Federal Government on the funding of hospitals and aged care. Nor are any many of us interested in relocating a rugby league team or having an annual four days of motor car racing at

Burswood. We are interested in having a hospital and ambulance system that has a buffer in operational capacity to service the public without unacceptable wait times. You have the money, get on with it.
John Fuhrmann, Karrinyup

Jab for the money

Dr Shirley Bowen states low flu vaccination rates are one of the contributors in ambulance ramping and we need to change the mode of health care.

The Australian Medical Association's same old solution is to build another \$3 billion, 1000-bed hospital. That is, build it and they will keep on coming with no change in public behaviour. The operational costs of such a facility would exceed capital costs within three years and so it goes on.

Enough of this political verbiage from all parties. Time to think outside the square.

Let's incentivise flu vaccination rates (or any vaccination program). Get your public health people and Lotteries Commission to create a prize for all West Australians who get their flu vaccination before the end of May each year. Let's call the draw Vaccination Vanguard, whereby all recipients of the vaccine including children get an entry (the parent of a family with three children gets three entries as well as their own).

Let's create five prizes of \$5 million and watch the change in behaviour. Ambulance ramping is not an isolated WA issue, rather a global one. Such an innovative solution to these ongoing dilemmas would be quite an achievement. Let's have some fun with health prevention to help counter our floundering health system.

Laughable? Probably, but the health provision crisis would be laughable if it was not so serious.

Roy Aitken, Thornlie