

Optus doesn't deserve its name in lights on our stadium

1 The announcement by the State Government of a \$500 million top-up for existing hospital projects hasn't received the standing ovation the self-aggrandising messengers were expecting, but of course, it's welcomed. It's a big win for the brave patients and health workers who were sick of being ignored and felt completely let down by this Government.

2 I want to thank the hospital staff, the patients and their families for speaking up and speaking out. In many instances they trusted the WA Opposition with their stories and they helped us expose the shameful state of WA's health system. I will always be very grateful for their trust.



3 Make no mistake, this was a call the State Government was dragged kicking and screaming to. It was a first, reluctant acknowledgement of their chronic failures in health. Nine years, no new hospitals and months of deflection and denial. And the Health Infrastructure Minister dared wonder why reporters weren't patting him on the back.

4 And ask yourself this, why was the announcement made in the absence of the Premier?

5 Rita Saffioti could have saved WA taxpayers \$217.5m this week. The honourable thing to do in committing to this half-billion-dollar health spend would have been to say to taxpayers almost half of that money would be coming courtesy of a scrapped Burswood racetrack. But no, not Rita. Despite the most overwhelming chorus of critics calling for it to be cancelled, Rita ploughs on — and no one in her Government has the guts to stop her. Unbelievable.

6 Surely Rita read Kim Macdonald's Thursday column — her own was directly underneath it. We know tunnel vision affects the Treasurer's decision-making.

Perhaps it also affects her reading, so let me help with a brief summary of Kim's work: **don't build the racetrack!**

7 As Acting Premier this week, Saffioti had the power to intervene, at the least as an interim measure, have the lights turned off on the Optus sign at the stadium. She didn't. After the triple-0 calamity, Optus does not deserve to have its name on our stadium.

8 If sportsmen have lost their medals and entertainers their honours for indiscretions they have later been found guilty of, why should a telco with this track record of catastrophic failure be entitled to keep its name up in lights? It shouldn't.

9 With no Parliament sitting this week the WA Liberals' listening tour has taken off to the breathtaking Kimberley.

It's been a pleasure to join Upper House colleagues Michelle Boylan and Neil Thomson and Federal member for Durack Melissa Price in Broome, Derby, Fitzroy Crossing, Myroodah Station and Kununurra. The region's top priorities: housing, health and law and order.

10 I'd love Brisbane to win, but Geelong just look that bit fresher. Enjoy your grand final day. The Cats for me by four or five goals.

Basil Zempilas is the Opposition Leader