

We must face facts: WA's tourism strategy isn't working

1 It is now beyond doubt. The WA Government is plagued by a chronic transparency and accountability problem. And they don't listen. Whether it's lead in the water at Perth Children's Hospital, legionella bacteria at RPH and Charlies or the cost and completion date of the new women's and babies hospital, this week the Premier and his various health ministers continued to bury their heads in the sand. They operate in secret, until their secret failings are exposed. That is no way to govern. And no way to treat staff, patients, their families or the people of WA.

2 Fortunately, there's no shortage of patients, families or hospital staff

BASIL ZEMPILAS



3 willing to fill in the blanks. I have never known the emails or direct messages to run this hot.

3 Bit-by-bit, the walls are closing in and this week in Parliament the non-government parties united to send a message. The Liberals, Nationals, Greens, One Nation, Animal Justice, Christian Democrats and Legalise Cannabis combined to call on the Premier to acknowledge the shocking state of ambulance ramping, review the appointment of multiple health

ministers and scrap the Burswood racetrack and redirect the \$217 million into health and hospitals. Over to you, Premier.

4 Until recently, John Langoulant was the WA Government's representative in Europe. The former agent-general in London was also a former under-treasurer and the man Mark McGowan asked to head up the Special Inquiry into Government Projects and Programs in 2017. Some CV.

5 So with that background, when John Langoulant says of the proposed Burswood racetrack, "by all measures, this isn't a great project, it's had no considered planning, it seems to

have no community support, seems so incongruous it's hard to believe it would be conceived of" that has to tell you something. Premier, axe the track and fix our hospitals.

6 The Tourism Minister can spin this all he likes, but there's no getting away from the facts; fewer people visited WA in the last financial year than in the 12 months prior — and they spent less money. That's a fail. Our tourism strategy is not working.

7 So what's going wrong? The Walking On A Dream marketing campaign looks great, but it obviously isn't cutting through. And it's a mixed message. How does that positioning statement and

associated imagery marry up with one-off Italian soccer matches and UFC or WWE?

8 I'll be honest, I'm not sure about Reece Whitby's credentials in tourism. He is after all the minister who thought the tiny cabins accommodation trial in Kings Park last winter was a good idea. Despite overwhelming indifference from the public, the minister suggested they'd be back. Guess what, they're not. Favourite Robert Redford

9 Film? The Natural from 1984 for me.

10 Whether it's the Bulldogs or East Perth Sunday, I hope the WAFL grand final is a cracker with a monster crowd.

