

20 October 2010

Letter to the Editor, Canning Times

I refer to the letter by Peter Whitelaw of Ferndale (Canning Times 19 October 2010) saying that the Barnett Government does not have a mandate to privatise any public hospitals. The State Government is not privatising hospitals or essential hospital services. To privatise something is to sell off a community-owned asset – that is not happening.

The Liquor Hospitality and Miscellaneous Union (LHMU) and the Health Services Union (HSU) recently sent a letter to the community claiming that the State Government is privatising essential services at hospitals, particularly the new Fiona Stanley Hospital. That is also untrue.

What the State Government is doing is considering contracting out the provision of non-essential services, such as security, linen, catering, cleaning, waste services, transport, procurement, sterilization, reception and clerical services, just as the previous Labor Government did and just as the Federal Labor Government does.

The union has forgotten that the previous Carpenter Labor Government contracted out renal services throughout the South Metropolitan area. This was done by the former head of the LHMU, the then Labor Health Minister Jim McGinty.

The Premier Colin Barnett has met with the LHMU and has told the union that we are not privatising any public hospitals or essential services. Despite his assurance, the LHMU has continued to mislead the public.

This issue is a political campaign by the Labor Party. The LHMU's secretary, Dave Kelly, is the Labor Party's Vice President.

When the new Fiona Stanley Hospital opens in 2014, it will continue to be owned by the State Government and the people of WA. It will take public patients and private patients just as Royal Perth Hospital and Fremantle Hospital do now.

It would be improper of the State Government not to look at contracting out non-essential services, especially where it provides taxpayers with value for money.

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