



TRANSCRIPT

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PROGRAM: 6PR – Mornings (PARKER)
SUBJECT: **DAVIES – Opposition leader interview on current issues**

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GARETH PARKER

There's a fair bit going on in State politics at the moment. There is the sale of the South Fremantle Power Station with just a 10-day expression of interest process, which I can't quite believe. Bill Johnston says that's a decision of Synergy and I can't quite believe that either, because he's the one announcing it. There is the all-of-a-sudden, out-of-nowhere Parliamentary inquiry into ambulance services that's going to be chaired by a United Voice aligned Member of Parliament Pierre Yang. Of course, United Voice, or the United Workers Union as they're known now are in the middle of industrial action with St John ambulance and have an ideological aversion to any services that aren't run by the Government. On the line, the Opposition leader Mia Davies... [greetings not transcribed]...

Do you understand the urgency in this South Fremantle Power Station deal sale?

MIA DAVIES

Uh, no, it does seem to be a remarkably short timeframe, and to my understanding, the site is complex. There's obviously going to be issues with decontamination, it's heritage listed, and so whilst it's comforting that there's an EOI process to test an unsolicited bid, I would suggest that if there was any real effort being put into making sure there could be any others being put forward, you'd give it a bit of a longer timeframe, surely. And I think the other question we've got, is whether or not the Minister himself has met with any of the proponents of this unsolicited bid. So there'll be some questions to be asked, no doubt.

GARETH PARKER

Or indeed any other Ministers?

MIA DAVIES

Correct. Yeah. And so we're not opposed to seeing the sensible development of the site, and I think you know there could be a great outcome, but 10 days as I say with such a complex site, doesn't really mean that there's going to be any, I would think, real

KEY: * Spelling indeterminate

competition, or anyone with an opportunity to put forward an alternative if that's what they're looking for genuinely.

GARETH PARKER

The fact that the Minister told Oliver Peterson on PerthLive yesterday that the Government has already received one unsolicited bid, what do you make of that?

MIA DAVIES

Well, there is an unsolicited bid process and Governments from time to time, I recall when we were in Government there were private sector organisations that come forward, the way that you need to manage it though properly, is that you are being completely open and transparent and that you are not engineering an outcome. And so a 10-day turnaround on such a complex site, we think raises some red flags, and they'll be the questions our team will ask to ensure that this is something that's being done with the right amount of scrutiny and openness and transparency.

GARETH PARKER

Do you understand why a Labor dominated Upper House committee's calling an inquiry into the future of ambulance provision in this State?

MIA DAVIES

Well, we've asked some questions of that in the Parliament already. We've questioned and suggested that perhaps it's because the Health Minister, unwilling as he is to admit that there is a health crisis, is looking for a distraction on that front. As far as I can see, and our health shadow Libby Mettam and our team, the reason that St Johns is under pressure is because they are unable to get their staff back out on the road, because we have bed block in our hospitals, which is a direct result of the Government not investing in our hospital system for the last four-and-a-half years. Now, I think it's remarkable that we have a Government stacked, or a Labor stacked committee, now looking into St Johns. And we've got some questions as a regional party, so the Nationals as well, that if there was a change in the contract management, what would that have in terms of an impact on support for our volunteer services across regional Western Australia? It smacks of idealism, and it smacks of ideology coming from the union, and it smacks of a Minister looking for a distraction.

GARETH PARKER

Well, you've got the Minister, the chair of the committee, with both their power bases in the United Workers Union and the United Workers Union have got a pay dispute on with St Johns.

MIA DAVIES

Correct. And the Opposition, and we've from time to time, had concerns and issues that we've raised with St Johns about the management of their contract, but this seems to be a very convenient, a very convenient excuse to shed some concerns on St Johns, distract from what's happening in our hospital system, which is as a direct result of the Government failing to invest and creating bed block, under resourcing, and I think

probably allowing the union to flex its muscles to a Parliamentary committee which should be out of the political process.

GARETH PARKER

Mia Davies, yesterday we brought our listeners the news that the Subiaco Council was refusing to increase the number of free parking permits for parents whose little babies are in the Neo-Natal Intensive Care Unit. Instead, they're going to send it off to an external consultant. Surely they can do better than that?

MIA DAVIES

Yeah, Gareth, this is a really tough one. And, you know, we've got parents that are dealing with such an extraordinary difficult time. I am not fully across the matters that the council has raised in its opposition. I understand they've sent it off to get some more information. I'd also probably ask whether or not there's a role for the State Government in being able to provide additional parking. It is a State Government hospital. And so, my undertaking will be that I'll go and find out a little bit more about what's happening, but you'd have to say that on the face of it, providing better access for these parents at a difficult time would be something that I think everybody would agree is something we should try and achieve.

GARETH PARKER

The council seem to be saying that if they provide more free parking, then more people will park there, which just seems ludicrous in the case of these parents who are going to be there with their cars parked to look after and visit their little tiny premature babies regardless. I mean, it's an insane proposition.

MIA DAVIES

Yeah, and I haven't had the conversation with the council. Normally when I get issues, and I'm a country MP, if I've got an issue that's raised with me in relation to a community and a council decision, I'll go and have that discussion with the council. I'll undertake to do that myself. But what I'd say is I think that most people would understand what's trying to be achieved. Whether or not that's the way to get there is the question at hand, and whether or not the State Government has a role to provide additional parking to support these parents is something that I would also say we need to work on. So, heart goes out to anyone that's going through that situation. I've had friends that have had to utilise those services. It's a really challenging situation and I'll go and have a discussion with the council to try and understand better that their processes are.

GARETH PARKER

If you get anywhere, we'd love to hear the explanation too, 'cause I'm not sure we're very clear either. Thanks, Mia.

Ends..