



Jenny Aitchison MP

Member for Maitland

Friday, 24 June, 2016

Magic Mike has his Mirabella moment

NSW Premier Mike Baird let the cat out of the bag on his pork barrelling of infrastructure projects in Coalition-held seats in Question Time yesterday.

In his own “Sophie Mirabella moment”, the Premier said *“The only way for the Member for Maitland to ensure that the Maitland Hospital is delivered is to vote for this Government, it’s the only way, the only way.”*

Former federal Liberal frontbencher Sophie Mirabella was caught out admitting that a Victorian hospital missed out on \$10 million in funding because she was not re-elected to the seat of Indi.

The Premier had attacked the Member for Maitland by saying Jenny Aitchison *“might not want anything in her electorate, but we do, Madam Speaker.”*

Ms Aitchison defended her championing of the Maitland Hospital saying: *“It is very clear to everyone in this House that I want Maitland Hospital and lots of other infrastructure to be built. I also want fully funded services.”*

Ms Aitchison said *“The Premier knows that the budget for Maitland Hospital is 25 per cent lower than he said it would be. There is a lousy additional \$2 million. This is outrageous.”*

“The Premier’s remark was flippant, rude and disrespectful to the people of Maitland who have been waiting for this hospital for five years,” Ms Aitchison said.

“The fact that it comes in the week after the Government failed to deliver more than a paltry \$6.2 million to the hospital, when it is already 25% behind budget, just adds insult to injury.”

“It has revealed the way the Baird Government is putting politics before good policy when money is spent in this state.”

Member for Port Stephens and Shadow Minister for the Hunter Kate Washington was ejected from Question Time when she suggested the *“Premier was having a Sophie Mirabella moment”*.

Ms Washington said she was appalled the Premier was *“playing politics with the Hunter’s health”*.

“I find it indefensible that he should make such a remark,” Ms Washington said.

The Premier’s remark came in response to a question from the Independent Member for Lake Macquarie Greg Piper, about the government’s commitment to the Lake Macquarie Transport interchange, given the project had failed to attract any funding in the budget.