



Speech by

PETER WELLINGTON

MEMBER FOR NICKLIN

Hansard 18 September 1998

**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL
APPROPRIATION BILL**

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—IND) (11.26 a.m.): I rise to speak in the debate on the Appropriation Bills and to respond to claims by the member for Maroochydore and the Leader of the Opposition that the Nambour Hospital has missed out on funding in the recent Budget. This is absolute rubbish. There is no way that the Nambour Hospital has missed out on any funding in the Budget—not one single cent. In fact, I am outraged that they have suggested that I would stand by and allow funds to be taken from the Nambour Hospital.

The Leader of the Opposition and the member for Maroochydore are playing politics, and the reality is that they are lousy players. The truth is that they do not know the difference between capital funding and recurrent funding. If they did, they would understand that the Nambour Hospital has lost nothing. At the recent Nambour Cabinet meeting it was promised \$3.2m, and it has been allocated \$3.2m. This is money not for building but for day-to-day operations. It consists of \$2.2m to boost services at the hospital, in recognition of the region's special needs, and an extra \$1m for an additional 12 mental health beds at the hospital.

I reject totally claims by the Leader of the Opposition that I gave a weak response to the Budget. By attacking me, the Leader of the Opposition is adopting the same strategy as the former mayor of the Maroochy Shire. By crikey, I am looking forward to the challenge from the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Maroochydore. The claims by the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Maroochydore are just rubbish. I have an assurance from the Minister for Health that \$26m will be spent on redeveloping the Nambour Hospital, and it will be spent in a realistic fashion, year by year.

I say to the people of Nicklin and to all Queenslanders: judge this Government on its actions and not on the hot air that is being generated in this Chamber by the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Maroochydore. There is no cutback to redevelopment spending at the Nambour Hospital. We have an extra \$3.2m in recurrent funding for day-to-day operations. It is a win-win situation for Nicklin.

The Leader of the Opposition and the member for Maroochydore are misrepresenting the facts. I am informed that the former Borbidge-led Government said that it would spend \$1.7m at the hospital last year. I am informed that it spent little more than \$678,000. Now it is trying to tell us that it was going to spend \$5.5m in the second year. What absolute garbage! I do not believe the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Maroochydore, because actions speak louder than words.

I will explain the situation in very simple terms so that even the member for Maroochydore and the Leader of the Opposition can understand. I hope that the Opposition Leader is listening to my contribution elsewhere, because I note that he is not here in the Chamber. As any intelligent and realistic person knows, in the early stages of a project the bulk of the work comprises design, planning approvals and so forth. This stage costs a darned sight less than the actual building of bricks and mortar. Once this planning stage is completed and the building begins, the costs rise significantly and this is when the Budget allocation needs to be very significant. In other words, one does not allocate huge amounts of money in the early development stage when it is not needed, one allocates what one considers will be needed for the redevelopment project.

This is exactly what this Government has done. It has placed a realistic figure on what can be achieved this year in the planning of the hospital redevelopment. The Government has allocated \$1.9m for this stage, and that is more than triple what the Leader of the Opposition spent last year. What the Leader of the Opposition is talking about is estimates, not actual building costs—estimates! He failed his estimates test last year—yes, he failed by more than two-thirds. He could not even get that right. Now he is trying to tell us that he was going to spend \$5.5m this year. What a load of rubbish! He was out by two-thirds last year. Heaven knows how much he was going to be out this year. Of course, this was nothing more than playing politics with the figures.

I suggest that the Leader of the Opposition needs to go back and repeat his primary school maths, and I urge him to take the member for Maroochydore with him. I put the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, the member for Maroochydore and the Government on notice that I will not sit back and allow one cent of funds to be taken away from the Nambour Hospital until that hospital is operating as it should. Unfortunately, that will not be for some time because of the disgraceful mess that the former coalition Government left the hospital in.
