



Speech by
**Mr DENVER
BEANLAND**

MEMBER FOR INDOOROOPILLY

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ELECTIVE SURGERY WAITING LISTS

Mr BEANLAND (Indooroopilly—LP) (6.44 p.m.): This amendment moved by the Minister is meaningless. It simply congratulates the Minister for Health for removing secrecy and openly publishing the Government's elective surgery waiting lists. Every night this Government moves an amendment to the private member's motion to the effect that it is proud of its record, that it is proud of what it is achieving for the people of Queensland. This is achieving nothing for the people of Queensland. The Government knows that the waiting lists grow longer by the day. The Minister knows it and the people of Queensland know it.

This is what we call a Clayton's amendment. Compared with the original motion, it shows very clearly what this Minister is about. The original motion "condemns the Minister for her callous manipulation of elective surgery waiting list figures that provide shallow self-promotion"—the very thing that she is doing here again this evening. There is nothing for the people.

The Minister has fallen into the trap again. She has shown arrogance to the member for Burnett. The people of Bundaberg have been subjected to the Minister's arrogance time and time again over this issue. It has been shown that the Minister is not interested in them at all. Accordingly, they are not interested in the Minister.

We see the same treatment being handed out in Brisbane. The Minister says that nothing has happened in Brisbane. There are more and more closures but nothing put in place to carry the load, and the waiting lists grow longer by the day. What has the Minister done with the additional \$1.3 billion—that is \$1,300m—that the Commonwealth gave in funding? Has she fattened up the bureaucracy? Has she fattened up head office? Has she fattened up the regions? The Minister has done nothing constructive with it at all in order to get waiting lists down. The Minister knows it and the record shows it. There is no point in the Minister coming into this House, mealy-mouthed, carrying on as she did this evening. The amendment shows that the Minister is ashamed of her record—and it is a shameful record indeed.

Let us look at the Cairns District Health Service. That health service says that there is no evidence to suggest that patients will be endangered by a ward closure at the Cairns Base Hospital. Medical staff at the hospital said that a quarter of the beds at the hospital were lost when the G-East ward was closed without warning. A hospital spokesperson said that the hospital had introduced a flexi bed policy to maximise the use of its facilities and also called on medical staff to be more efficient.

This is probably a bit like Fly Buys in that people will have to accumulate points to get a bed. Is this the new program? Accumulation of points? I suppose we will go home and find information in the mail to the effect that we will have to accumulate points to get a hospital bed. That is what the Minister is doing. What a farce this Minister is!

This Minister knows that she has failed on this issue. She has failed time and time again. Now she is trying to hide elective surgery figures and others. The Minister is not producing them. We know that she is taking them off to Cabinet so that they are not subject to FOI. The AMA caught up to the Minister in Brisbane on the issue of ward closures. A recent media release from the Queensland branch of the AMA states—

"The closure of two general wards ... is another warning sign the State's public hospitals don't have the resources to meet budget."

The president of the AMA in Queensland said that the loss of the wards and 40 outpatient clinics at the RBH means that patients will now find it even harder to get on a waiting list at the hospital.

The point is that the waiting lists grow longer and longer by the day. The best the Minister can come up with is some useless amendment to the effect that she is happy at the fact that she is releasing some waiting list figures. She says nothing about being proud of her record in reducing waiting lists, because they are growing longer. They are not getting shorter; they are growing longer by the day. The record speaks for itself.

We have not heard anything from the Minister about what she is doing with the \$1.3 billion from the Federal Government. Not a word has been said about that. This is a Government of blame. All we have heard tonight is blame: blame the Federal Government; blame the people of Bundaberg; blame the people of Brisbane; blame the people of Cairns. Blame everybody!

Mr Quinn: Blame the doctors.

Mr BEANLAND: Blame the doctors, as the member for Merrimac says. But the Minister does not accept the blame herself. What an embarrassment this cant-do Government is to the people of Queensland. What an embarrassment this Minister is to the people of Queensland. "Can't do it" is here again. This Minister cannot get those waiting lists down. Of course, we hear it time and time again. We have not heard where the Minister is squandering the money—

Time expired.
