



Speech by

**DESLEY BOYLE**

**MEMBER FOR CAIRNS**

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Hansard 9 March 1999

#### HEALTH PORTFOLIO

**Ms BOYLE** (Cairns—ALP) (6.40 p.m.): Tonight I am pleased to support the amended motion and decry the original motion of the Opposition spokesperson for Health and the comments of the former Minister for Health. They pretend to believe that health is only about hospitals. They know in their hearts and heads that there is much more to health than just hospitals.

Tonight in the debate they ignored the trends towards day surgery, shorter stays in hospital, changes to bed allocations, community-based health services, and palliative care, such that in their pain and sometimes while suffering terminal illness, people can remain in their homes. They ignore the trend towards community-based support for mental health services in the community, which will provide support to prevent hospitalisation. They ignore the trend towards early intervention programs and to the broader education and health promotion programs, which are the programs that will lead us into the new century. Instead they concentrate on a hospital system that has been, but which is no longer, sufficient as a direction for addressing the health of all Queenslanders. Their focus on hospital beds is irresponsible. They are also irresponsible in causing division in the community based on people's pain and anxiety, when funding from the Commonwealth is the true problem.

This evening the former Minister for Health, Mr Horan, dared to criticise this Government's Health funding even though we have increased the Health budget. He was the one who took the additional \$15m in Commonwealth sign-on money and distributed it to his favoured areas around the State prior to the election rather than joining with us in a clear plea to the Federal Government to give Queensland Health funding a fair go.

The former Minister would know where that increase in Health funding has gone, and I am pleased to say that Cairns has had its share. It has gone towards palliative care services—the \$10m program recommended to Minister Horan and which he funded with half a million dollars. Instead our Minister has progressively increased the funding to the full \$10m amount of the program. The increased funding has gone towards a quarter of a million dollar increase for local councils' immunisation programs. It has also gone towards the establishment of the 15 PPP parenting programs that are up and running around the State, with a further 15 to be up and running by the middle of this year.

In so many debates this week and last week we have heard how members on both sides of the House understand that crime prevention requires early education in the home and a focus on family values and the importance of parenting. Our Health Minister introduced that initiative as soon as she became the Minister.

The funding has gone towards test drives, as we are calling them, of a new style of child health delivery involving support groups for parents and the delivery of child health services into the home. It involves advice, referrals and joint initiatives with other Government departments. An example can be found at the Smithfield and Edmonton health centres in Cairns.

The money has gone towards innovative school nurse programs that address with young people the very issues that frighten all of us in this House—suicide, drug use, violence and despair. I am pleased to say that the Cairns State High School and Yarrabah are part of that program. I am proud to be on the Minister's health team and proud that our Minister is leading the shift to a broader delivery of health services—a delivery suited to the nineties and the new century—rather than, as the

shadow Health Minister suggests, basing health services purely on hospital-focused funding, a system that on its own is insufficient.

I am amazed that tonight the shadow Minister for Health alleged abuse. She alleges abuse after abuse—and the Hansard record shows this—when in fact all members of this House know today that the abuses that we heard about are those that have poured from her own lips. What have we heard from the Opposition in terms of constructive suggestions? Nothing! What have we heard in terms of alternative health policies? Nothing! Where have we heard it offer, as the people of Queensland would wish, a joint non-political effort to secure the proper share of Commonwealth health funds? Again, it offers no help. All it offers is destruction, criticism, abuse—nothing that is constructive. It will not wash with the public.

By contrast, Minister Edmond has increased Queensland Health funding, sped up the rebuilding program, broadened the focus of Health and led with new initiatives. I extend my congratulations to her.

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