



Speech by

**LINDA LAVARCH**

**STATE MEMBER FOR KURWONGBAH**

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Hansard 10 November 1999

### **ELECTIVE SURGERY WAITING LISTS**

**Mrs LAVARCH** (Kurwongbah—ALP) (6.39 p.m.): I rise to support the amendment moved by the Minister for Health. We on this side of the House welcome tonight's debate and say thank you to the Opposition for giving us another opportunity this year to put our health achievements on the record. The Opposition has given us a free kick to put our health achievements on the record seven times already in the past year. So it is with much pleasure that I once again highlight our health achievements.

We are proud that Queensland Health is currently implementing the largest hospital building and refurbishment program in Australia. The program includes the rebuilding, refurbishment and re-equipping of public hospitals, aged care facilities and community health centres in metropolitan as well as regional, rural and remote communities. This program will provide Queensland with well-equipped, modern and up-to-date facilities able to meet the State's future demand for health care where people live.

But the achievements do not stop there. This is not just about achievements in capital works programs; it is also about achievements in service provision. In relation to service provision I will speak about Caboolture, which services my electorate of Kurwongbah, as an example of this Government being one of action and commitment—a Government about providing services where people live. Of the 34,500 patients per month who receive specialist outpatient services from the Royal Brisbane Hospital, about 40%—that is, 13,800 patients—come from outside the district. About 27%—that is, 9,315 patients—attend the hospital for secondary-type services that could potentially be treated elsewhere, for example at the Caboolture Hospital.

This change has the capacity to impact positively on clinic waiting times, as does the availability of public and private specialist services in districts such as Caboolture. For example, Caboolture Hospital offers specialist services such as general medicine, general surgery, gynaecology, oncology, orthopaedic surgery and paediatric general medicine.

Also in the area is the Redcliffe Hospital, which offers specialist services in areas such as diabetes, gynaecology, neurology, oncology, ophthalmology, orthopaedic surgery, general surgery, paediatric general surgery, paediatric general medicine, urology, vascular surgery, palliative care, pain, respiratory, rheumatology and general medicine. Clearly, as services in the Redcliffe and Caboolture district are increased, there will be a lessening need for people to travel to Brisbane, be it the Royal Brisbane Hospital or the Prince Charles Hospital, for treatment services.

In addition to achievements in relation to hospital services, there are other health service achievements of this Government in the Caboolture area. These include the provision of help for sexual assault victims through the allocation of \$130,365 to the Caboolture rape and sexual assault support service; the inclusion of Caboolture as one of the additional 15 locations in Queensland to offer free courses for parents as part of the Government's Strengthening Families initiative; and the boosting of funds for local home and community care services to aid local frail older people and younger people with disabilities and their carers.

I hope that the member for Caboolture has taken note of these facts and that he will not once again blindly follow the Opposition in voting against the Government, as he has done in the previous health debates. When the member for Caboolture decides on which side of the Chamber he and his party will sit when the division bells ring, I hope that he bears in mind the following. If he votes with the

Opposition, he will be voting against the increase in funding for the Caboolture rape and sexual assault support service; he will be voting against Queensland Health offering free courses for parents to strengthen families in the Caboolture area; he will be voting against boosting funds for local home and community care services for older persons—I wonder what the residents of Bribie Island would think of that; and he will be voting against new and improved health services for Caboolture. It is time that the member for Caboolture took a stand and voted to support his community, for I know that it warmly embraces these services.

Finally, I can honestly say that I am proud to be a member of a Government that can truly say it delivers. I am proud to be a member of a Government that does not play politics with people's health. The Minister should be congratulated on removing the secrecy and openly publishing the Queensland elective surgery waiting list figures—hospital by hospital, category by category, and specialty by specialty. I also commend the Minister for taking services to where the people live.

Time expired.

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