



Speech by

Mr M. HORAN

MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA SOUTH

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QUEENSLAND HEALTH

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (6.23 p.m.): In rising to speak in this debate, I want to start off by taking the Premier to task. Tonight, between 5 p.m. and 6 p.m., we had a debate that was about truth in this Parliament. In this debate, the Premier said that the previous Government destroyed the capital works program and that elective surgery went backwards. He knows that the opposite was the truth. That just shows the way in which the Premier has lowered the standards of this Parliament.

I did not bother taking a point of order. The Premier knows full well that the previous Government did about 7,000 extra operations a year and it implemented Surgery on Time. In terms of the percentage of people waiting over time for operations, it took Queensland's waiting lists from the worst in Australia—something like 47% of people waiting for Category 1 operations for longer than 30 days—to the best; we reduced that figure to 5%. The previous Government also had Category 2 operations on track to get them down to 5% from some 44%. At the time of the change of Government, the figure was down to about 11%. When the coalition came to Government, there was only \$1.2 billion in capital works funding. We got an extra \$1.2 billion. So there was some \$2.4 billion in funding. We did that because, in terms of the PA Hospital, we inherited watercolour drawings. There were no bed numbers and no plan. A social worker was in charge of the capital works program. We reorganised the whole thing and made it work to a stage at which the capital works program in Queensland Health is now the pride of this State. The coalition Government did that.

The main topic of this debate has been about the underhanded way in which this Government has moved towards significant changes in Health, particularly by denying people services and particularly through the move to push old people out of public nursing homes. Some of the riding instructions that were given to the consultants who undertook this particular review indicate what this Government was about. They include revenue-sharing arrangements between Queensland Health and the Treasury, taking full advantage of the non-Government sector, and modification of the demand on health services. If anything refers to not giving people full access to services in the way in which they used to access them, modification of demand is it. They were the riding instructions. They were the interesting matters that were put before this particular review.

The recommendations include looking at opportunities to cease or redirect certain aspects of the capital works program. The Government is trying to tell lies about the capital works program that the previous Government doubled from \$1.2 billion to \$2.4 billion. However, it is looking at ways in which to cease or redirect that program. The recommendations also included allied health or rehabilitation services being addressed by Queensland Health and a detailed case brought forward that incorporates capital costs, recurrent costs and operational and human resource issues. Already, we are seeing the results of that recommendation in Toowoomba, with 70 kids on the waiting list for speech therapy and 120 people on the waiting list for physiotherapy. Another recommendation was that the Queensland Government should create immediate opportunities to shift the responsibility for residential aged care provision from its balance sheet. The Government reckons that they are not for sale! It wants to shift aged care from its balance sheet and onto that of the Commonwealth and the non-Government sector. Notwithstanding the Premier's doublespeak and gobbledegook, the Government wants to shift aged care off the balance sheet. If that is not selling off aged care, I do not know what it is. However, there is an exception to the recommendation in relation to those rural and remote areas where the non-

Government sector is not represented. Of all the nursing homes throughout Queensland that the State Government runs, that situation does not apply to many towns.

Recommendation 10 is to discuss strategies with the Private Hospitals Association that would avoid an unreasonable burden being placed on the public sector. The only way the Government can do that is to stop people going to the public sector or shift them from the public sector. Under Labor, that is what we are going to see. Health care might be free in name, but it just simply will not be available.

Mr BEATTIE: I rise to a point of order. I am not aware of the references in the document that have been referred to so I move that they be tabled.

Mr HORAN: I am happy to.

Mr Beattie: No, the document you referred to that you have got in your hand.

Mr HORAN: I am happy to. This is the one that I am reading from. I am happy to.

Government members interjected.

Mr HORAN: Those are my speech notes.

Government members interjected.

Mr HORAN: I am happy to table them.

Mr BEATTIE: I rise to a point of order. Will the member table both of them? Let the record show that the member has to table both.

Mr HORAN: I am happy to do it.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Clark): The member will table both documents.

Mr HORAN: I am happy to. It will demonstrate quite clearly what this Government is on about. Recommendation 14 states that Queensland Health should be encouraged to pursue export earnings. Why cannot Queensland Health concentrate on looking after Queenslanders? That is what we want to see from the Health Department—a department that looks after the locals, that looks after Queenslanders. Instead, the hospitals are going to be running around looking for export earnings.

A Government member interjected.

Mr HORAN: I am happy to table them, because they demonstrate quite clearly what the Government has been trying to deny.
