



Speech by

MIKE REYNOLDS

MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE

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JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY MEDICAL SCHOOL

Mr REYNOLDS (Townsville—ALP) (10.27 a.m.): Yesterday in this House, the shadow Minister for Health made outrageous claims in regard to the James Cook University medical school and the role of the Director-General of the Health Department. One day later, her claims and her credibility are in absolute tatters.

Let me quote from the Townsville Bulletin of today. The vice-chancellor, Bernard Moulden, indicated that—

"Claims construction of the James Cook University medical school will be sidelined are unjustified."

According to the article, he went on to say that—

"... Queensland Coalition claims that bureaucracy would jeopardise the construction of the medical school were off the mark."

He also said—

"Nearly \$2 million of the state's promised \$10 million for the new school had already been made available.

...

This will be more than sufficient for the preparation of the site for the new building."

In fact, James Cook University at this stage has spent only \$1.1m. He went on to say that—

"Dr Stable gave me an assurance ... there would be no bureaucratic hold-ups and that there would be no insistence on waiting for the full AMC accreditation process to work itself out."

He also went on to say that—

"He told me JCU's submission to the AMC would be successful on the first pass, and reaffirmed that he would support the early release of the funds."

One has to ask oneself: why does the shadow Minister for Health rise in this House and make unsubstantiated claims for political reasons only?

Miss SIMPSON: I rise to a point of order. That is untrue and offensive. The member should explain why the director-general has not declared his conflict of interest in this matter.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member has sought a withdrawal.

Mr REYNOLDS: I will answer that. The Director-General of Queensland Health is on a lot of national health boards—as he should be. However, he does not sit on the AMC independent subcommittee, which makes accreditation decisions. In fact, a New Zealander has been appointed to the subcommittee to ensure impartiality. So the Opposition's argument about a conflict of interest is inaccurate. It is about the shadow Minister for Health and her disregard for the position of the director-general. She has made political statements in this House.

A Government member: She's a disgrace.

Mr REYNOLDS: It is an absolute disgrace. The JCU medical school is getting on. That is how it should be.
