



Speech by

**PHIL REEVES**

**MEMBER FOR MANSFIELD**

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Hansard 2 August 2001

**APPROPRIATION BILLS [ESTIMATES COMMITTEE E]**

**Mr REEVES** (Mansfield—ALP) (2.51 p.m.): Unfortunately, the minister is attending a ministerial council all week, so she is unable to take part in the debate. Therefore, I will speak a few words on her behalf.

As usual, the member for Maroochydore got her facts wrong. She has problems with her maths and cannot seem to get the figures right. The equity return is fully funded by the Treasurer and is not at the expense of health service delivery. This is part of the managing for outcomes budget process, which I would have thought the member for Maroochydore would understand. Likewise, all debt servicing is fully funded.

This is the fourth record Health budget delivered by the Beattie Labor government. This year's Health budget is a recurrent budget of \$4.06 billion, as well as \$364 million in capital projects.

Queensland Health's network has 63,000 health professionals and administrative staff and remains one of Queensland's largest employers. I am pleased to note that this year's budget announcement of an extra seven full-time specialists employed throughout the state includes a specialist at Prince Charles Hospital, a paediatrician nephrologist at the Royal Children's Hospital who will provide specialist support services to children suffering from chronic kidney problems across the state, a developmental paediatrician at the Mater, a gynaecological oncologist at Townsville Hospital, a specialist at the Royal Women's Hospital, a physician at Mount Isa and a rural paediatrician at Roma. Specialist services will also be expanded through the employment of a visiting ophthalmologist at Cairns, Townsville, the Gold Coast and Mackay and through the expansion of the ENT services at Cairns and Mackay. Therefore when the member for Maroochydore whinges about a lack of staff in this year's budget, she clearly missed the detail of those and other new positions that will have a direct impact on the delivery of health services through the state.

As well as those extra doctors, an extra 16 child health nurses and early intervention specialists will be employed for the 18 new and expanded child health centres, costing \$1.5 million this year. Those child health centres provide a great service to Queensland. We have one at Palmdale in my electorate. It does terrific work, especially with the Positive Parenting Program and the like.

A further 22 school-based youth health nurses will be employed this year. The success of the youth health nurses program is also felt throughout the whole state as our young people benefit from the first-hand knowledge of the nurses who work at the coalface, that is, at the schools.

I note that the member for Maroochydore is particularly interested in intensive care services, so I am pleased she has welcomed the allocation of more than \$6 million for the enhancement of intensive care services throughout the state. This includes \$3.3 million to bring forward the commissioning of the critical care unit at the Caboolture Hospital this year. I congratulate the Health Minister on this initiative.

As well as the provision of increased funding of \$3.3 million to expand the intensive care services at the PA, Royal Brisbane and Townsville Hospitals, an extra \$10 million will be spent this year to reduce the number of patients awaiting elective surgery. This delivers on the Beattie government's election commitment to inject an additional \$20 million into reducing waiting lists over the next two years so that more people can have their operations faster.

Labor's waiting list reduction strategy has improved the way that our public hospitals deliver surgical services to the people of Queensland. In fact, in the first two years of the Labor government, 20,753 more people received their elective surgery. This is an increase of 9.8 per cent on the previous two years under the coalition government. The Labor government publishes quarterly reports for 33 public hospitals that collectively undertake more than 95 per cent of all elective surgery performed in Queensland public hospitals. Anyone can now access that information on the Internet and doctors know which hospitals have the most capacity to perform different operations with the least delay.

Another great Beattie initiative is the allocation of an extra \$5 million this year to treat 16,500 people waiting the longest for public oral health services. The state government will provide more than \$105 million for oral health services this year. I am very pleased that the federal Labor Party has indicated its support for public dental health services, unlike the scroogey Howard Liberal government. Of course, the Beattie government will continue to pick up the \$20 million shortfall in funding for Queensland public dental health services dropped by the Howard government.

Queensland Health's \$2.8 million Statewide Health building program, the largest health care facilities building and refurbishment program ever undertaken in Australia, is now entering its final stage. This budget is a great win for health services in Queensland and follows in the tradition of the four great budgets that we have already delivered.

Time expired.

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