



Speech by

Mr L. SPRINGBORG

MEMBER FOR SOUTHERN DOWNS

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HEALTH CARE

Mr SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.26 a.m.): We have heard much in parliament this morning from this state government about what it is doing allegedly for the people of Queensland in the area of improved health care. I would like to point out some of the areas where the government is not achieving for the people of Queensland, including the Royal Brisbane Hospital with a \$19 million budget blowout, and the fact that a razor gang has been employed to cut costs which will inevitably mean cuts to services—Cairns Base Hospital with a \$7 million budget blowout—and a razor gang being identified to provide for cuts including cuts to medical staff and bed closures. Nambour Hospital's own director of emergency medicine has labelled the emergency department as 'dangerous and dysfunctional', according to documents obtained by the Queensland opposition under freedom of information.

Princess Alexandra Hospital is being forced to close its gynaecology department because of budget constraints despite servicing about 2,000 patients a year and latest Queensland Health figures showing more than that 700 gynaecology patients are overdue for surgery.

Townsville's six-bed short stay ward has closed down. This is despite more than a quarter of Townsville's emergency patients having to wait 11 hours before they are transported to a surgical bed. The Beattie government has promised to fund only three per cent of the nurses' pay rise, which is currently at 3.8 per cent, with hospitals having to make up the difference. Hospitals, we know, are already struggling with their budgets.

The latest Queensland Health figures show one in 10 Queensland patients wait 11 hours to be transferred to a bed, and one in five wait more than eight hours. More than 11,000 Queensland patients are overdue for elective surgery; 9,000 of these have waited more than a year.

Queensland Health's own documents show that the QE II Hospital was forced into bypass, meaning that it could not take any new patients in January, February, March, September, October and November of last year. QE II recently suffered the closure of a dozen surgical and orthopaedic beds.

Time expired.