



Speech by

## Dr Bruce Flegg

MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

Hansard Wednesday, 5 October 2005

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### DAVIES INQUIRY

**Dr FLEGG** (Moggill—Lib) (6.41 pm): It gives me great pleasure to second the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition tonight. Let us have a look at the letter that Commissioner Davies sent to the Premier because there are some important points to be made. Firstly, the issues relating to the Rockhampton Hospital were already presented to the Morris royal commission but Commissioner Davies has been unable to proceed with the investigation of them because they were yet to be brought into evidence.

These complaints were already before Mr Morris. Without being given the extension of powers that the commissioner is seeking he cannot continue inquiring into what Morris was inquiring into. He goes on to say in this letter that if we look into the complaints from Rockhampton that have already come to the Morris inquiry then, in his opinion, fairness would dictate that the inquiry should be expanded to cover other complaints from hospitals all over Queensland that had already been made to Morris. These complaints were already in the system in the Morris royal commission. Due to the government's restrictive terms of reference the Davies royal commission simply cannot look into these complaints.

This is half a royal commission. Let us not forget that the powers of a royal commission have meant that the things that have been uncovered, like secret waiting lists and so on, would never have been uncovered in the more limited Forster inquiry.

Let us have a look at the Premier's claims in relation to the terms of reference that have been given to Mr Davies. Firstly, he said they are adequate. When we have a look at this letter we find that they are nowhere near adequate. In fact, the vast bulk of hospitals in Queensland cannot even be looked at by this royal commission. It will never be able to get to the bottom of the health problems in Queensland because it has been barred from looking at these hospitals.

Further the Premier said, 'The commissioner can request an extension of his terms of reference and if he does we will give it.' We cannot interpret this letter any other way than as a letter of request to extend the terms of reference. Premier, this is that request. The commission has put the ball right back into the Premier's and the government's court. The government will not be able to say that it has got to the bottom of the health crisis in Queensland unless the commission is allowed to investigate the complaints and hear the witnesses who have already come forward. I would say to the Premier that Forster cannot achieve this goal.

I know the Premier desperately wants to be able to claim the Forster inquiry will enable him to say that he has fixed the health system. I am sorry, but it will not. Witnesses in the Forster inquiry were never protected.

**Mr Reynolds** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I ask the minister to please be quiet.

**Dr FLEGG:** Witnesses in the Forster inquiry were never protected. The Forster final report now has the very strong perception of government interference. People coming before the Forster inquiry were forced to testify without protection, often in front of their bosses from Queensland Health. Let us see what

Mr Forster says about that culture in Queensland Health. He says, 'Dysfunctional behaviours including bullying and intimidation are frequently reported.'

The government expects the Forster inquiry to get to the bottom of things. This is why it cannot get to the bottom of things. Mr Forster said that the review found extreme levels of dissatisfaction among Queensland Health staff and that many staff were angry. He said further that the organisation is failing its employees. Yet the government will not give the royal commission the powers to protect these employees from the totally dysfunctional Queensland Health that its own inquirer has so roundly condemned.

The quote of the Rockhampton sittings of parliament belongs to the Premier on Channel 10 News tonight. He said, 'No sensible or sane person would suggest a third inquiry.' Here is a letter from Commissioner Davies whom I would consider to be a very sensible and sane person. That is exactly what he suggests—a third inquiry. To date the government has not given this inquiry the powers to get to the bottom of things.

Further, the Premier cannot use as an excuse the fact that it would delay the reporting of the Davies royal commission because Commissioner Davies gives him the way out. The answer is here. Allow him to deliver a final report when it is due and immediately reconstitute, hopefully, under Commissioner Davies to look into these other hospitals.