



Speech by

**John-Paul Langbroek**

**MEMBER FOR SURFERS PARADISE**

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## **HEALTH SERVICES AMENDMENT BILL; HEALTH PRACTITIONERS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

**Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—Lib) (9.54 pm): I rise to speak on the two cognate bills, the Health Services Amendment Bill 2005 and the Health Practitioners Legislation Amendment Bill 2005. At the outset, I must say that I am disappointed by the Health Services Amendment Bill 2005. It is the Beattie government's shallow attempt to solve a deep-seated problem within a health department that is too centralised. The trouble is that this legislation will create a more bureaucratic health department in the process.

In his report, Mr Forster spoke about the new structure that the legislation will bring, claiming it would have regard for community need and internal service capabilities. It is quite important that, in terms of funding and health directions, decision making should be brought down to a lower level in Queensland's hospitals. In his second-reading speech, the health minister, who walks both sides of the street on the issue of water fluoridation, read an excerpt from Mr Forster's report which labelled the structure of Queensland Health as bureaucratic and mechanistic. It also reported that Queensland Health had a highly centralised formal authority and hierarchical layers of decision making. That is quite an indictment that has prompted the government to act, but I do not believe that the solution to this problem lies in bringing in more bureaucrats in the form of three new area health services.

In fact, let us see how the bill might change the minister's second-reading speech if it were introduced after the establishment of the three area health services. In the minister's second-reading speech, the 11th sentence states—

The review found that Queensland Health has a bureaucratic, mechanistic structure with a highly centralised formal authority and hierarchical layers of decision making which does not support a responsive, integrated and efficient health system.

To my mind the establishment of three area health services would change that sentence to read: 'The review found that Queensland Health has a bureaucratic, mechanistic structure with a slightly less centralised formal authority and hierarchical layers of decision making which does not support a responsive, integrated and efficient health system.' I think the people of Queensland are expecting more as a result of Morris, Forster and Davies and the revelations of their inquiries, reviews and commissions than a change from 'highly centralised' to 'slightly less centralised'.

When, as a result of poor management and a lack of funding by government, people lose faith in an institution, as they have with Queensland Health, they need to feel that their concerns are being heard. That is why the coalition's public health section of the health policy—and I stress that that is all that has been announced so far by the shadow health minister, and it was announced in October—would see independent local hospital boards established to give local residents a say in how their hospital is run and the services that it offers.

This bill offers no say for the people who will utilise the hospital. It does not allow local communities to offer input, but merely offers the same centralist position of, 'We make the decisions and you accept them.' In the wake of the Dr Death scandal that has enveloped Queensland Health, a policy that will allow Queenslanders to voice their concerns and recommendations at a community level would do much to

restore confidence in our health system and assure people that Queensland Health is on the ball and is responsive to their needs. The policy of the Liberal and National parties will also cut 2,000 bureaucrats over two years through natural attrition and get Queensland Health back on track to deal with the public waiting lists that are spiralling out of control under this government. My colleague the member for Moggill deserves credit for working tirelessly with stakeholders, patients, and his Liberal and National colleagues to produce the coalition's public hospital section of health policy, a policy that will go a long way to fixing Queensland's sick system.

The new advisory council to be led by Professor Duckett concerns me somewhat. This new bureaucracy is to be headed by one of the architects of Medicare Gold, which contributed to the Labor Party's catastrophic loss in the 2004 federal election and which was subsequently described as a turkey by senior Labor figure Barry Jones. The health minister spoke of the recruitment of Professor Duckett as bringing some intellectual grunt to Queensland Health. If the intellectual grunt that we are to expect from Queensland Health is of the calibre of Medicare Gold, I think the health crisis in Queensland has the potential to worsen.

The Premier and the health minister have told us continually that they are changing the culture of Queensland Health, but the truth is that they are just blowing more health dollars on hiring bureaucrats instead of health professionals to get our sick system working. The bill that is being debated cognately with the Health Services Amendment Bill is the Health Practitioners Legislation Amendment Bill 2005.