



Speech by

Peter Wellington

MEMBER FOR NICKLIN

Hansard Wednesday, 24 May 2006

HEALTH QUALITY AND COMPLAINTS COMMISSION BILL

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (8.29 pm): I rise to participate in the debate on the Health Quality and Complaints Commission Bill 2006. At the outset, I indicate that I will be supporting this bill because I think this is a bill in which the minister has tried to respond to the community concern about the level of health care and what has been happening in our health system in Queensland.

I note that in the minister's explanatory notes he actually states that the bill fulfils the government's commitment to establish a new health commission and improve the health complaints system. He talks about how the bill establishes the Health Quality and Complaints Commission and that this commission will replace the Health Rights Commission and repeal the Health Rights Commission Act 1991. I am very pleased that we are repealing the Health Rights Commission Act and replacing the Health Rights Commission, because when we pass an act of parliament to create another commission I do get concerned that we are just building another bureaucracy.

When I looked in the explanatory notes at the proposed funding to be budgeted for the running of this commission for the year, I note under the heading of 'Estimated Cost for Government Implementation' the minister indicated—

The Government has announced that the commission will have an annual operating budget of \$7.7 million.

I really hope all Queenslanders who have such high expectations about the level of health care in Queensland take a deep breath and think about what it actually costs. In a couple of weeks, we will see the Treasurer bringing down our next state budget, and I imagine that over one-third of all the dollars in the budget will go to health care. In this bill, \$7.7 million is being allocated for the implementation of the intent of this bill. Sometimes I think that we may have unreasonable expectations of what to expect from the level of health services in Queensland. I certainly do not envy the minister's role in trying to rebuild the confidence in our health system in Queensland.

I will be supporting the bill. I have listened to the contributions of other members during the debate today, and I must say that I do not intend to come into this chamber and use this as simply an excuse to name members of the community who are not in a position in this House to respond or speak to the bill. I believe there are appropriate forums where people are able to take their gripes or raise their concerns about members of the community. Whether a member likes them, hates them or does not support their policies, I think there is a time and a place for everything. I do not believe a debate on this bill is an appropriate forum to attack an individual member of the community. So I resume my seat and I commend the bill to the House.