



Speech by

Robert Messenger

MEMBER FOR BURNETT

Hansard Wednesday, 15 February 2006

BUNDABERG BASE HOSPITAL

Mr MESSENGER (Burnett—NPA) (9.18 pm): When the Premier and his ministers visit Bundaberg next week I demand that they allocate more resources and open more beds at the Bundaberg Base Hospital. Since 1989 bed numbers at the Bundaberg Base Hospital have decreased by 45 per cent and the population has increased by more than 40 per cent. A population of around 80,000 is serviced by only 120 beds.

Today we heard the health minister announce more beds for Queensland public hospitals except Bundaberg. Does this government have a conscience? Bundaberg Hospital has had to cope with the biggest health disaster that this country has ever seen. Now this vindictive arrogant Labor government is out to punish the people of the Burnett and Bundaberg by denying us extra beds and once again risking the lives of our families.

How can one trust a political party which has such a cruel, vindictive and heartless streak? How can one trust a government which said in 2003 that we had the best health system in Australia, we did not need a royal commission into health, it would cost too much money, flew Patel out of the country before Toni Hoffman's allegations could be investigated and has a health system dominated by spin doctors, not medical doctors? How can one trust a government which says that we have the best paid doctors in Australia but pays junior resident medical officers, doctors who are the engine room of emergency departments, just \$23.45 hourly and \$25.47 hourly? Senior resident medical officers, third-year doctors in our emergency departments, are paid an hourly rate of \$27.32. An executive support officer working in Queensland gets paid the same as a first or second year doctor. A resident medical officer earns \$53,000. This is what the doctors say to me in a letter today—

We daren't put our names to paper for fear of retribution. Queensland Health has not changed, the culture has not changed. We are writing this plea to seek your assistance in making the parliament aware of Queensland Health's gross indecency in relation to the remuneration of doctors in the public hospital system. Attached are the current wages categories for medical officers in Queensland Health and definitions for each category. These rates include the 4 per cent wage increase awarded at the end of last year. For comparative analysis current wages categories for nurses and administrative officers are included. Our junior and principal house officer level doctors have been and are still receiving less than clinical nurses and administrative officers level 4 who more often than not have no tertiary qualification and above. Additionally, these doctors—

Time expired.