



Speech by

Robert Messenger

MEMBER FOR BURNETT

Hansard Tuesday, 28 March 2006

CYCLONE LARRY, BENEFIT CONCERT; HOSPITAL WAITING LISTS

Mr MESSENGER (Burnett—NPA) (10.17 pm): Late last week I was contacted by an experienced and respected music promoter, Mr Rick Szabo from Nightowl Entertainment, who asked if I could help him cut through some red tape and deliver before the Premier and other community and business leaders his proposal to stage a relief or benefit concert for the victims of Cyclone Larry. I would hope that all members of this chamber would support a Cyclone Larry benefit concert. Today I spoke with Minister Warren Pitt, who is also very enthusiastic about a relief concert. He has promised to personally take the issue to the Premier. I have also spoken with Lawrence Springborg, leader of the coalition, who is very keen to lead a delegation to the Premier regarding the issue.

A benefit concert would realise some very important goals. The concert would significantly boost the fundraising efforts that the Premier and Prime Minister have started. I give them both and the people of Australia a pat on the back for the \$8 million raised so far, but we can do better. The concert would also significantly boost the morale of victims and all workers—the SES, the tradies, the police, the ambos, the Army, health workers and public servants. We have had a relief concert for other disasters—for the tsunami victims. Let us do the right thing and have the same response for our own Queensland families.

Tonight I would also like to advocate for a constituent of mine who desperately needs a hip replacement operation. Mr Danny Rappard is being forced to wait years on this Labor government's public hospital waiting list. Unfortunately, this is not an isolated incident. Hundreds, if not thousands, of Queenslanders find themselves in the same situation as Danny. Mr Rappard is a young family man with a wife and two children whose life is in significant crisis right now because this Queensland health system cannot guarantee him a relatively simple hip operation in a timely manner. Because of the pain and disability associated with Danny's medical condition, he has lost his manager's job, is living with his parents and has to rely on five different types of medication, including morphine, to cope with the pain. The wait for an operation is ruining his and his family's lives. I call on the health minister to adopt the coalition's health plan and double the amount of visiting medical specialists and significantly increase bed numbers so that waiting lists and times for joint replacement therapy and unnecessary family and patient misery are drastically reduced.

The earliest time that Danny is able to consult with a specialist is in October and the earliest time for an operation with Queensland Health is years after that. Danny is better off breaking his hip. He would then have the operation performed immediately by Queensland Health. I call upon the health minister and the Premier to look after—

Time expired.