



Speech by

## Robert Messenger

MEMBER FOR BURNETT

Hansard Thursday, 20 April 2006

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### PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION REPORT ON HEALTH SYSTEM

**Mr MESSENGER** (Burnett—NPA) (12.16 pm): It is with pleasure that I rise to speak to the Premier's health motion. Nothing has changed. We have not learnt the lessons of the royal commissions, lessons from Toni Hoffman, lessons from Patel victims and their families—lessons that they have given in blood. The same corrupt system which hired Patel, covered up for Patel, flew him out of the country business class and has failed to bring him back is still in control of Queensland. Nothing has changed.

Amongst all the human misery that we have as a result of the continued and comprehensive mismanagement of Queensland Health from 1998, eight years, it is ironic that the only reason we are debating this health motion is that there is one life, one political life, that is looking a bit crook. It has caught a disease. In fact, the diagnosis given by the people of Queensland in the last three by-elections is that the political life of this Premier and this Labor government—

**Mr Caltabiano:** Is terminal.

**Mr MESSENGER:** It is terminal. I thank the member for Chatsworth. The Premier is an electoral liability and this is a pathetic, disgusting attempt—

**Mr Caltabiano:** And the backbench know it.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Fouras): Order! The member for Chatsworth and the member for Burnett, both of you should not talk to each other in the chamber right now.

**Mr MESSENGER:** The Premier is an electoral liability and this is a pathetic attempt to shift blame and spin his way back to political health. It is a contagious disease. I can see at least 15 to 20 Labor backbenchers who have caught the same disease. I have not yet put a name to it, but I am sure someone will come up with one.

This disease is terminal for a number of very good reasons. This is the Premier, according to the Morris and Davies royal commissions, who created a health system which killed at least 87 patients at the Bundaberg Base Hospital. This is the Premier who created a health system which allowed 'Dr Death' to carve a trail of misery and torture which has affected more than 2,000 families in the Bundaberg and Burnett region. In fact, all over Queensland the imprint of 'Dr Death' is felt. This is the Premier who created a health system built on fear—a health system which, through all-powerful CEOs, made bullying an art form. And it came from the master—the Premier. It is a system where all staff, clinicians and non-clinicians were and still are scared witless to speak out because they have seen how this Premier's system has destroyed and trashed professional careers.

**Dr Flegg:** The Premier is not even here.

**Mr MESSENGER:** He is not even here to listen to this debate. Even after Toni Hoffman's letter was tabled in the parliament on the Tuesday, this Premier allowed 'Dr Death' to continue operating on, maiming and torturing my constituents. He was allowed to continue working on the Tuesday, the following Wednesday and the following Thursday. This is the Premier who, through his health department, bought 'Dr Death' a business class air ticket and flew him to America.

**Dr Flegg:** Never to be seen again.

**Mr MESSENGER:** Never to be seen again, and still he has not got him back. After 'Dr Death' was safely out of the way, this Premier started the biggest cover-up and propaganda campaign that we have seen since World War II. This is the Premier who would have destroyed Toni Hoffman if it were not for Hedley Thomas's Google search and thorough investigative journalism. This is the Premier who had to be forced by the public, the media and people on this side of parliament to establish a royal commission. That royal commission proved that this Premier's health system put budget bottom lines before people's lives. This is the Premier who has already made loud public statements that we have the best health system in the world. I would like to believe him, but he has told us that before. In 2003 the Premier was using the same lines. In 2003 he was singing from the same song sheet.

Time expired.