



Speech by

Robert Messenger

MEMBER FOR BURNETT

Hansard Wednesday, 24 May 2006

PATEL, DR J; LESTER, MS V

Mr MESSENGER (Burnett—NPA) (10.20 pm): The Peter Beattie Labor government is once again failing the victims of Jayant Patel, victims such as Vicky Lester, a lady who—we learnt through royal commission testimony—was brutalised and tortured in a most foul and horrible.

This Premier made a promise to Vicky Lester and all other Patel patients that they could consult with and visit the medical specialist of their choice. The Premier has repeatedly broken his promise. He broke that promise to victim George Pausa, whose case I recently detailed in this place. Now, Vicky Lester is being made, by the Premier's health bureaucracy, to receive treatment from a medical professional who is not of Vicky's choosing.

This is an unacceptable situation. Mrs Lester and her GP are sick of dealing with a Labor health bureaucracy that continues to bully her. Mrs Lester must have another complicated and dangerous operation. One wrong move during surgery and she may have to wear a colostomy bag for life. She must have total trust in her medical specialist.

Why does the Premier not keep his promise and allow Vicky to visit and consult with a colorectal specialist of her choice in Sydney, New South Wales? Why is the Premier's bureaucracy forcing Mrs Lester to visit a colorectal specialist of their choice?

Understandably, Mrs Lester's elderly mother is taking matters into her own hands and paying for her daughter to visit the best doctor in Australia. Why is Mrs Lester's mother being forced to pay up-front for her daughter's visit to Sydney and then having to hope like heck that Peter Beattie's bureaucracy compensates her for it? Why does Vicky have to remortgage her home to the cost of \$20,000 to pay for all the other medical procedures which Peter Beattie's Queensland Health has failed to pay? Like many other Queensland Health patients, Mrs Lester has had to fight every step of the way to receive proper medical treatment and a decent chance of compensation.

I am also alarmed by some reports that I have received of alleged bullying and intimidation by lawyers and patient advocates. I will investigate those reports in detail over the next few days.

In the name of decency, I demand that Vicky Lester and all other Patel patients be allowed to consult with and visit the medical specialists of their choice. I demand that the mediation and compensation process be made more transparent and fairer for victims. I demand that this government lift all arbitrary bureaucratic deadlines imposed on Patel patients.

Government members interjected.

Mr MESSENGER: I hear the interjections of members opposite and I am disgusted by them. They have no respect and no understanding of the pain that Patel victims continue to go through.