



Speech by

## Robert Messenger

MEMBER FOR BURNETT

Hansard Tuesday, 8 August 2006

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### PATEL, DR J; COMPENSATION CLAIMS

**Mr MESSENGER** (Burnett—NPA) (9.48 pm): In response to one of the greatest health disasters in Australia's history—another disaster of his own making—this Premier has created a compensation process for Patel victims which has failed, exploited and revictimised many Bundaberg and Burnett families. Out of frustration five members of the leading Patel support group committee have resigned. The majority spoke to me and asked for my help. I have also been contacted by many more scared and angry victims who have experienced the Premier's compensation system. They have asked me to speak out on their behalf. They do not want other Patel victims to be treated the way they have been treated.

Women are still being subjected to a vicious psychological softening up process by a Queensland government appointed psychiatrist who is asking inappropriate questions. A young female victim who recently underwent a psychological assessment told me that the psychiatrist forced her to reveal details of childhood abuse. She said—

Everything he asked me he made me feel like I was lying. He ripped everything I said to shreds. He was patronising. He had this smirk and was scoffing at me the whole time.

I table an extract from that interview.

*Tabled paper:* Document titled 'Transcript of Interview Friday 28th July'.

I have passed the name of the government psychiatrist to the Premier and I hope he does the right thing and fully investigates the situation. How many more women have been subjected to this government sponsored abuse? How have these biased medical assessments affected victim compensation payouts?

Families who have had loved ones die while waiting for the Premier's compensation process have missed out entirely on compensation. I have recently spoken with two Patel widows and they have not even had their funeral expenses paid yet. Another broken promise and still he refuses to compensate Patel widows for pain and suffering. This government is trying to hide the fact that many people who are seeking fair compensation are being bullied into accepting an undersettlement.

**Mrs MILLER:** I rise to a point of order. This man, the member for Burnett, was at the Bundaberg patient support group meeting last week and he could not understand what the Attorney-General said.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr English): Order! There is no point of order.

**Mr MESSENGER:** This government is once again using the tactics of fear, secrecy and intimidation against the families of Bundaberg. This government is behind a ham-fisted attempt to silence me, as evidenced by the behaviour of members tonight. I table a letter on behalf of a Brisbane law firm which stupidly threatens me with legal action because I suggested publicly that Patel victims should seek a second opinion if they were unsure of their legal rights. When it comes to the interests of my constituents, I will not be intimidated or silenced.

*Tabled paper:* Letter dated 18 July 2006 from KM Splatt & Associates Solicitors to the member for Burnett regarding the State of Queensland special compensation process.