



Speech by

Dr Bruce Flegg

MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

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MOTION: HEALTH SYSTEM

Dr FLEGG (Moggill—Lib) (5.39 pm): Nothing is closer to my heart than the health care of Queenslanders.

Government members interjected.

Dr FLEGG: They are showing their true colours on the other side tonight, I see. One thing stands out when we look at the health system of this state, as I have done for many years—that is, nothing has changed. It is business as usual and every output measure that the government applies continues to show that what the government is doing is not working. It is extraordinary that this government, after everything we have gone through with health, still has not woken up to the fact that it does not work. The government is not doing it in the right manner.

Let us look at one of the major areas—that is, that this government's attempt to run Health with a massive bureaucracy has failed. The government was told that it failed by Peter Forster and the other inquiries that we had into the health system. It was made clear that this was one of the major cultural problems that was stopping the provision of clinical care. So what was the response of the government? We had 3,000 additional non-clinical staff put into the health system of this state. So an inquiry told the government that it had too many administrative and non-clinical staff, and the government responded to it by appointing 3,000 more non-clinical staff.

We do not have to go further than some of the piecemeal solutions the government applies to see this in action. When the government failed at Caboolture, when it could not keep the doors open, it went to a different model. The government outsourced it to Aspen. The government should not have had to do that; it should have been able to run it. That is exactly the model we are talking about—where a lot of that administration is cut out and clinicians are allowed to run it. Goodness knows what will happen next February when the government takes back the Caboolture emergency department. It could not run it before and it will not be able to run it again.

The Premier made a ministerial statement this morning. The name of the Premier may have changed but the words have not. In the ministerial statement, we again heard about numbers. We had to treat patients by numbers. We had the number of dollars, being \$7.15 billion; we had the number of staff; we had more numbers of dollars. The Premier said that more clinicians and more beds translates to better and quicker patient care. The reality is that it has not.

Firstly, the clinician numbers given are clearly dodgy, but in order to measure the health care that is delivered, we need to measure the outcomes—that is, the waiting lists, the number of operations, the speed with which people are treated in the emergency department and the time it takes to see a specialist. Those opposite will remember that we put this forward as a policy at the last election, and I am delighted to see the federal government say that we need an independent board and some community input to get these things going.

The cries from the other side are extraordinary because I just got on the web site and had a look at this government's new children's hospital. What is it run by? It is run by a board, and it is a very impressive board as well with some very prominent Queenslanders. In fact, it is what the Howard government is

talking about and what we have been calling for on this side for a very, very long time. I hope the government gets it right for the children's hospital. If it does get it right, the government needs to learn the lesson that it cannot be done just for a children's hospital; there are in excess of 100 other hospitals where intractable problems have to be addressed.

We keep getting promises and more promises—for instance, that we will see a Gold Coast hospital. Recently, the government tried to move the hospital from one block of land to another. It is years away in an area that needs the service now—today. Those patients need the care today—not years from now and not because the government cannot decide where to put it. Speaking about where to put a hospital, the Sunshine Coast hospital has had a couple of different moves—again, it is years and years away.