



Speech by

## John-Paul Langbroek

MEMBER FOR SURFERS PARADISE

Hansard Tuesday, 21 August 2007

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### HEALTH SYSTEM

**Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—Lib) (11.50 am): I want to highlight this morning the failure of the Beattie Labor government in terms of health planning in this state. We know that the Queensland Minister for Health, Stephen Robertson, said that the situation is unacceptable and going to change. That is a quote from Mike O'Connor last week. The Premier said that Queensland Health had turned the corner since the fallout of Bundaberg in 2005. Remember this is the same Premier who gave up his Treasury responsibilities to oversee the U-turn of the rundown government vehicle driving the public health system in Queensland.

The Premier and the health minister have revealed their true colours in health. The Premier acts like a fireman putting out fire after fire on the media front. Whenever there is a story he gets in there to sort it out. The health minister has a story a day. One day it is that the federal government should release more nursing home places. The next day it is that the federal government should give us more money. When the Auditor-General highlights problems in the areas of workforce planning, capital works planning and the worthless measures outlined in the Ministerial Portfolio Statement the minister says they are investigating, they are changing things, they are improving things and they are reassessing things. It is never anything to do with him.

We have seen the human faces of the health crisis. Just yesterday we saw baby Ryan Kelly who could have very easily died while being on the waiting list for life-saving heart surgery. Elijah Nganeko is nine months old and in need of heart surgery and has been on the waiting list for surgery for a third of his infant life. Last week, in a classic example of the Premier being the fireman putting out fires, Matthew Kuhne, a teenager suffering a broken neck from a horrific motorcycle accident, had his operation cancelled five times before the Premier's intervention secured his operation. This was due to this story being on the cover of the *Gold Coast Bulletin*. It begs the question: if the Premier had not become involved, how long would Matthew have waited for his life-saving surgery? More importantly, how many others are missing out because they are dutiful citizens who wait to be contacted for their operations.

We have seen a great example of the lack of planning with the recent flu epidemic in this state, which was acknowledged by the Premier this morning. There was a lack of preparation. The advice last week was, 'If you are sick go to hospital.' That is a recipe for chaos. If we look at other governments we find that the Hong Kong government has been planning for bird flu pandemics for years. It has had permanent public education campaigns, provided public antiseptic hand wipes and has sufficient medical supplies. Here in Queensland the Premier and the health minister closed the gate long after the horse had bolted.

What did they say? 'Don't go to the Ekka.' How ridiculous is that. What happened? The RNA lost \$1.6 million because of this government's lack of planning and a scare campaign. We had people like Deborah Miller and Glen Kindness die after contracting Influenza A. Where was the public education program?

I highlighted this in April. I expressed my concern after I discovered that elderly patients were missing out on their free flu vaccinations because of Queensland Health quotas for providing them to GPs.

Queensland Health refuted the allegations back in April. Yet a few months later we are experiencing a shortage of Tamiflu and other influenza treatments. So much so that the Premier has had to come into this parliament and tell us about giving out 300 to nursing homes in the last week. He has had to raid the emergency supplies to keep up with demand.

There is no medication. There are not enough beds. There are not enough staff to run the hospitals. There is a complete lack of planning by the Beattie government. Now we are seeing it with the new children's hospital. That was policy on the run during the last election campaign. The proposed hospital may well be opened a year later than originally planned. I predict similar delays for the hospitals on the Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast.

As Mike O'Connor said in the *Courier-Mail*, 'People are dying while the Beattie government indulges in sycophancy, self-congratulation and press releases.' Nowhere is this more evident than when I go around the state to highlight issues and see the Beattie Labor government putting out press releases. When I was with my colleague the member for Mirani in Mackay a couple of weeks ago, suddenly we had a lot of press releases about why Mackay is so well done by when it is clearly not. I have seen the same things in the *Cairns Post* with the campaign to get better services for Cairns. Now we see the Beattie government trying to say that it is doing things in Cairns.

We constantly hear the health minister misleading the parliament and the public about the claim that the feds have short-changed the states on health. The federal government is providing everything it said it would in the healthcare agreement from some years ago. It is only because the Queensland government discovered that it was not putting enough into health after Bundaberg that it has increased its amount of funding and is now begging the federal government to increase its funding as well.

The Queensland government has breached the agreement to deliver equitable and timely access to healthcare services. Clearly, Queensland Health has not turned the corner. As Mike O'Connor says, 'It may well have turned the corner but its destination, ultimate disintegration, remains the same.'