



Speech by

## Phil Weightman

MEMBER FOR CLEVELAND

Hansard Wednesday, 17 October 2007

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### MOTION: HEALTH SYSTEM

**Mr WEIGHTMAN** (Cleveland—ALP) (6.09 pm): I rise to speak against the motion moved by the member for Surfers Paradise. Here is a fact for the opposition: Queensland public hospitals are busier than ever before and are treating more patients than ever before. Through our \$10 billion Health Action Plan, we are providing hospitals with the staff and resources to meet the challenges of a growing and ageing population. We are opening new beds across the state. We are funding new and upgraded emergency departments at the Gold Coast, Robina, Logan, Prince Charles, Redcliffe, Gympie, Rockhampton, Townsville and Princess Alexandra hospitals. In my electorate, the Redland Hospital's new emergency department is on track to be opened next year. That emergency department has been expanded from 13 to 31 treatment spaces as part of a \$15.4 million redevelopment. We are building new hospitals and redeveloping others including Dalby, Weipa, Bundaberg and the QEII.

Our record investment in health is producing record activity in our hospitals. During the 12 months to 1 July 2007 a record 817,132 patients were admitted to our public hospitals—a 4.5 per cent increase on the 781,737 admitted during the previous year. A record 886,829 patients were treated in hospital emergency departments—a five per cent increase on the 844,213 treated in the previous year. A record 3,504,305 patients were treated in specialist outpatient departments—a 7.2 per cent increase on the 3,270,304 patients treated in the previous year. At Redland Hospital outpatient services continue to expand, with almost 60,000 patients seen in 2006-07. That is nearly 7,000 more patients than seen in the previous year. Redland Hospital has also kept pace with growth in emergency presentations by treating 39,781 patients in the emergency department this year. Throughout the state our public hospitals treated 140,509 elective surgery patients during the 12 months to 1 July 2007, including 28,730 in the June quarter. As a result, the percentage of patients waiting longer than nationally recommended for elective surgery fell for the third consecutive quarter.

These figures show that through our Health Action Plan we are continuing to respond to the growing demand of health care. It is disappointing that the opposition appears disinterested in these positive changes rapidly taking place in Queensland Health. It would seem that, by and large, it would prefer to be part of the problem and not part of the solution. The great statesman humanitarian Theodore Roosevelt had a fine appreciation of what it meant to try to do the right thing and to be constantly criticised for the genuine efforts to right wrongs. He said in a speech in April 1910—

It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena ... because there is not effort without error and shortcomings; but who does actually strive to do the deed; who knows the great enthusiasm, the great devotion, who spends himself in a worthy cause, who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement and who at the worst, if he fails, at least he fails while daring greatly.

He went on further to say—

Far better it is to dare mighty things; to win glorious triumphs even though checkered by failure, than to rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy nor suffer much because they live in the gray twilight that knows neither victory nor defeat.

We acknowledge that there is still more to be done, and that is why we are using our time and effort to get on with the job of improving our health system for Queenslanders. It appears that some of those in the opposition would rather use their time and energy looking for fault rather than finding a way forward. I reject the opposition's motion and fully support the government's amendment.