



Speech by

Robert Messenger

MEMBER FOR BURNETT

Hansard Thursday, 24 May 2007

HEALTH AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Mr MESSENGER (Burnett—NPA) (12.57 pm): In rising to contribute to the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2007 I wish to reaffirm my commitment to the people of Burnett and Bundaberg that I am going to work as hard as I can to ensure that they have the best public healthcare system in Queensland—indeed Australia. This government owes the people of Burnett and Bundaberg the best public healthcare system in Australia because of the way that they have been abysmally treated.

It is common knowledge what happened at Bundaberg Base Hospital—the unnecessary deaths and the cover-ups by this government. The point that needs to be made is that the tragedy that happened at Bundaberg was caused because this government did not plan for the growth in demand for health services at the Bundaberg Base Hospital. Indeed, a common theme that has been repeated by this government is a failure to adequately plan for the growth of this state.

The medical system became dysfunctional because it was taking its orders from a dysfunctional government. Putting it simply, Patel was a symptom of a disease. The disease is rightly called Peter Beattie's Labor. What happened at Bundaberg was that the budget bottom line was placed before the lives of patients. The only way to fix the Queensland health system is to start by reempowering communities through a local health board that has the power to hire and fire the CEO and a local health board that has the power to control budget expenditures.

It is important that we have that principle because the good old principle of self-interest kicks in there. We will have people who have a self-interest in having a fully functioning and credible health service for their district making those decisions. They will not be the sort of government employee who will roll over and accept decisions that are handed down from a central authority, as happens all round Queensland Health and particularly happened at the Bundaberg Hospital. The situation at Bundaberg Base Hospital, as with many hospitals in Queensland, is far from perfect. However, I would like to share with the parliament a letter.