



Speech by

## Robert Messenger

MEMBER FOR BURNETT

Hansard Thursday, 23 August 2007

---

### PATEL, DR J

**Mr MESSENGER** (Burnett—NPA) (5.09 pm): It is almost two years, five months since Toni Hoffman's letter blowing the whistle on Patel and this government's appalling mismanagement of the state's health system was tabled in this place. It is almost two years, five months and one week since this Beattie government paid for Patel to fly business class to America where he has lived since. It was revealed prior to the last state election almost a year ago that Patel tried to come back to Queensland but the Premier and his government secretly stopped his return. In recent times, there have been allegations in the media that this Beattie government is fumbling the extradition of Patel. The Premier has to explain why there has been a delay and why the correct legal paperwork has not been filled out.

Today I renew my call for this Labor government to pursue all legal avenues, both criminal and civil, to bring justice to the victims of Queensland Health. This Labor Premier does not want Patel in the witness stand in Queensland, because the evidence that is produced will show that this Premier is personally responsible for running down our health system for more than a decade—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr English): Order! Can the member for Burnett give me an assurance that this matter is not before the court at the moment?

**Mr MESSENGER:** That is correct; I can give you that assurance. The Premier is personally responsible for the cover-up which ensued after the events at Bundaberg Hospital became public. The reason Queenslanders are willing to consider letting the federal government run our state's health system is that anything has to be better than what we have now. Nobody else but Labor could be so incompetent in running our health system.

My warning to Queenslanders is: be careful. Before Toni Hoffman blew the whistle in Bundaberg there was another 'Dr Death' in Queensland and his name was Kevin Rudd. It was Kevin Rudd and Peter Beattie who got rid of our local hospital boards and centralised the management of health which started the deadly rot—the cancer in Queensland. Today we have seen the same old fatal comedy act—the 'Pete and Dud' show, trying to pull the same old lethal gag, with 'Rudd the Dud' proposing more centralised management of health care. Only this time it is not a state that is going to suffer; it is going to be a whole nation. The 'Pete and Dud' show with its killer track record has given us another recipe for 100 more Bundaberg health disasters and a recipe for 100 more 'Dr Deaths'.

If the Premier was so concerned about fixing up the health mess in his own backyard, he should start by keeping the promises he made before the last election to deliver \$41 million in improvements and 30 new fully staffed and funded beds at the Bundaberg Base Hospital by early 2008. He has not kept that promise. In fact, he has broken it. Bundaberg should be the best funded and resourced public hospital in Australia but we are still in crisis, not because we do not have dedicated, intelligent staff but because this Premier is punishing us for showing the world just how incompetent and corrupt the Labor Party is.