



Speech by

Hon. Stephen Robertson

MEMBER FOR STRETTON

Hansard Tuesday, 22 May 2007

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Queensland Health

Hon. S ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Health) (10.10 am): Queensland Health has reached another significant recruitment milestone in its ongoing campaign to boost its medical workforce. When we began our \$10 billion health reform process two years ago, we promised Queenslanders that we would recruit more doctors for our public hospitals. I am delighted to report today that we continue to deliver on that commitment.

At the start of the health reform process in June 2005, Queensland Health had 4,552 doctors on its payroll. Today, we have 5,588 doctors treating patients in Queensland public hospitals. That means that we have achieved a net increase of 1,036 extra doctors in less than two years. That is a significant recruitment effort in the middle of Australia's ongoing national shortage of doctors. Queenslanders can be assured that all of these 1,036 extra doctors are real doctors, not statistics.

The latest doctor numbers come from Queensland Health's payroll database for the pay period ending 6 May 2007. So they are real doctors, working in real jobs right now at public hospitals throughout Queensland. The figures also take into account doctors who have left Queensland Health, including young doctors who have completed their clinical training, resignations, retirement, deaths and end of contract, dismissal or transfers out of Queensland Health.

There is no argument that Queensland Health has become a more attractive employer for doctors in the post-Patel reform era. The Beattie government has already stimulated workforce growth by providing public sector doctors at all levels with significant pay increases. We are also providing better conditions and allowances, plus enhanced professional development opportunities. That is why doctors are voting with their feet to be part of our \$10 billion health reform revolution to build and improve Queensland's health system.

While having recruited an extra 1,036 doctors is a significant achievement, we still need more. We need more doctors to ensure our public hospitals continue to meet the challenges of a growing and ageing population. That is why Queensland Health will continue to recruit for skilled and experienced doctors throughout Australia and overseas.