



Speech by

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CAIRNS BASE HOSPITAL

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—Lib) (6.02 pm): Tonight I would like to draw the House's attention to the voices of the people of Queensland. As elected representatives, it is our duty to listen to the people and it is our duty to deliver services where they are needed. Unfortunately, the Bligh government has failed Queenslanders when it comes to delivering adequate public health services. Across the state our hospitals are at full capacity because the Labor government failed to plan for population growth. There are not enough beds or staff to cope with demand, and nowhere is this more evident than in Cairns.

As the *Cairns Post* noted in its 12-page hospital liftout on the weekend, the Cairns Base Hospital is a textbook example of Labor's ineptitude in health delivery. The Cairns Hospital should have been relocated and expanded back in the 1980s but the Goss government made the populist decision to scrap the relocation, and the people of north Queensland have suffered ever since.

The situation in Cairns is at breaking point. A gross shortage of beds, staff and resources is having an adverse effect on patients. It is a dangerous recipe and sooner or later lives will be lost. The problems at Cairns Base Hospital have not occurred overnight. These insidious and systemic problems have been boiling for nearly three decades, yet successive Labor governments have ignored the people of north Queensland. The Beattie-Bligh government is proving one of the worst offenders. Now we have the member for Cairns, who is also a senior minister, at loggerheads with the health minister over the state of the hospital. She says that they need two hospitals. He says 'get in the queue'. It begs the question: does she just say one thing when she is in Cairns and a different thing around the cabinet table in Brisbane?

Cairns is at least 10 years away from a new hospital under the current government—another 10 years of population growth; another 10 years of inaction if this government is returned to power at the next election. The people of Cairns deserve more. I have raised the problems at Cairns Hospital on a number of occasions, as have my coalition colleagues. If the Premier and health minister will not listen to us, for the sake of patients in north Queensland I hope they listen to the people.

The *Cairns Post* is lobbying for a new hospital. I support the *Cairns Post* and congratulate it on their effort. Tonight I want to place on the public record my support for the people of Cairns in their campaign as well as for the people in their campaign for a new hospital in Mackay. The *Daily Mercury* is also campaigning for a much-needed new hospital. I will be attending a forum on Tuesday next week along with others to hear the concerns that both these communities are expressing about their health services.