



Speech by

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MEMBER FOR SURFERS PARADISE

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—Lib) (3.57 pm): It was my pleasure to be a part of Estimates Committee B. I also want to thank the parliamentary research staff and the attendants. It was a very long day and evening. The committee hearings, chaired by the honourable member for Sandgate, were conducted in a good-natured way throughout the day.

I note that we had the Treasurer first of all, who spoke with his usual prolixity. We received some interesting answers to questions. In terms of the Health budget, I note that the honourable the minister acknowledged, in answer to prehearing non-government question on notice No. 1, that the government had spent in excess of \$711 million for the three area services, which was a 10 per cent increase. Therefore, I want to advise the honourable the Treasurer that, given that his budget had an \$809 million surplus this year, there could be problems if the health minister has a 10 per cent blow-out in his budget again this year. It will take all the surplus that the Treasurer has allowed for.

I note that the honourable the health minister had a couple of arguments, which he has returned to even today, and they were the shortcomings of the federal government and the election promises of Labor. We were actually talking about this year's budget. In terms of election promises, I think it is acknowledged that both sides made election promises. The government won the election and the people of Queensland would like to have those election promises upheld. I do not think that saying that the promises that we took to the last election would not be fulfilled by now is really important to the people of Queensland in the sense that we did not get elected and the government did. The people of Queensland would like to have the government's election promises upheld.

The honourable member for Murrumbidgee mentioned the Commonwealth-state health funding agreement. The honourable member for Murrumbidgee seems to suggest that if the Queensland state government increased its funding by any exponential amount—say, 50 per cent—on the argument that he just put, under the health care agreement the federal government would have to increase its contribution by a similar amount. I really cannot see that that shows any sort of fiscal responsibility. When you have an agreement, I am sure there is some sort of arrangement. It would not just be a 50-50 arrangement; it would be based on actual amounts that would be put in. The Queensland state government has acknowledged that it certainly increased its own funding during the last health care agreement.

Issues were raised relating to the Queensland Plan for Mental Health. I was disappointed to hear that on the Gold Coast the extra beds that we definitely need may not be reached in 10 years when the mental health plan is supposed to cater for 600,000 people.

On climate change initiatives it was disappointing that the minister spoke about energy savings instead of being able to identify, as some of the other ministers were able to, the carbon emissions from his department. I note some of the concerns that arose from my questioning about housing for Queensland Health staff and the number of safety and condition inspections that have not been done. Certainly the department has made a concerted effort in the period from the Auditor-General's report to the estimates committee and more will be inspected, but clearly more needs to be done in this area.

I was very concerned about the answer given to the prehearing non-government question on notice No. 2 relating to how many beds would be opened in Queensland public hospitals in 2008-09. Once again we came back to the theme of the honourable minister telling us how many election-promise beds there had been, which was 69, and then later in the afternoon the minister returned with the information that there would be 142 beds, including 63 at Carrara.

From the answer given to us I identified that no beds would be opened in public hospitals on the north side, which includes Caboolture, Prince Charles and Redcliffe hospitals. Therefore, I was perplexed to read a recent *Northern Star* newspaper article that referred to a press release I issued stating that there would be no new northside hospital beds in 2008-09. However, the paper quoted health minister Stephen Robertson as saying that Queensland Health expected to open an additional 117 beds on the north side this financial year. I would like some clarification about that because, clearly, the graph given to us in answer to question on notice No. 2 contained no such information. It seems that the minister has said one thing in the parliament and another to the *Northern Star*.

I asked a question on notice about three categories of elective surgery and how many people had to wait at the 100th percentile. That was given to me in percentage form. It was explained to me that I could not have the information because I would run the risk of identifying people. The department did not give me the answer as I requested.