



Speech by

Ros Bates

MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA

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MOTION: QUEENSLAND HEALTH

Ms BATES (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (6.02 pm): The performance management systems audit identifies fundamental weaknesses in the current practices more than four years after Queensland Health first responded to the criticisms generated from the Forster report. It is fairly obvious from the report that there is no clear link between planning and the funding allocation process, and basically no planning equals planning to fail. The Statewide Health Services Plan was developed to guide health system reform and provide a framework for the efficient and effective delivery of all services to Queenslanders. Health service planning should always involve consultation with clinicians, providers and service managers—those people at the coalface who will be responsible for actually implementing the plan—and also consultation with the communities and the consumers who will be using the services that are planned.

The Townsville Hospital expansion was announced in the absence of an endorsed service plan and a capital infrastructure plan—something which I find quite extraordinary having been involved in the planning, accreditation and implementation of quite a few health facilities in Victoria and in Queensland. The audit noted that the budget for the additional 70 beds has been established. However, there were no budget provisions that included funding for the services that are there to support the expansion. How can any government put forward a proposal for a new hospital expansion when there were no services for medical records, a pharmacy, hotel services and waste management—all of the things that help run a hospital? You cannot increase bed services without those expanded clinical services as well. Having been in the Townsville Hospital, both the old and the new, on many occasions over the last eight years, it begs the question and one has to wonder how it is possible to go ahead and plan a hospital and forget about services like medical records, catering, cleaning, pharmacy et cetera.

I sat with my colleague the member for Surfers Paradise at the Robina Community Centre in 2005 and contributed as a nurse to the Forster inquiry back then. Normal review practices in health administration and medical and nursing administration are always to review, to check and to review again. The lack of planning and the lack of involvement of grassroots medical and nursing staff in ensuring that hospitals run effectively was noted and a heavy emphasis was also placed on Mr Forster's report. Four years later we are still no better off, with billions of wasted funds thrown at health services by a government that has no idea how to write a business plan to ensure that hospitals actually run efficiently.

The Deputy Premier should be likened to Sir Humphrey Appleby from *Yes, Minister* 'because those pesky patients just keep getting in the way of hospital services'. I mean, who actually funds for expansions of services at a hospital without consultation? Funding for hospitals should always involve those people at the coalface, and those people who actually know how to run hospitals are usually nurses because we have been doing it for years. How on earth can you admit a patient without medical records? You cannot discharge them; you cannot admit them. So all of these patients in Townsville Hospital would contribute to bed block permanently, because without a medical records department it is a case of *Hotel California*—you can check out any time you like, but you can never leave.

Nurses know that if you upset the medical records staff, pharmacy department staff, kitchen staff, laundry staff and waste management staff these places just do not run. Southport Hospital is a classic example of this. Here we are with a new hospital being planned at Parklands and we need more beds, not

less. The reason that the Southport precinct actually worked was because it was a medical precinct. Private operators built hospitals there because of the colocation advantages of being on the same street and across the road from a public facility. The waste with decisions such as putting an MRI into the Gold Coast Hospital in 1998 when the only paediatric MRI between Lismore and Brisbane was actually already across the road at the Wesley Hospital was extraordinary.

In terms of Surgery Connect, I often have a bit of a chuckle to myself every time this wonderful new facility in Nerang that has only recently been opened is mentioned. Well, I have news for those on the other side of the House, but I actually opened that facility in 1998 and commissioned it for Queensland Health. It is not new. It was state of the art back in 1998, but I have not been there since I bought all of the equipment and sat there in the operating theatres and decided what was needed to run the facility—what would eventually become a 140-bed facility. It was the only hospital in Australia to get four years accreditation after only being opened for four months. Southport should be used as a step-down facility. Hospitals are for the sickest of the sick, and we need step-down facilities. We certainly do not need to have the Southport Hospital closed.