



Speech by

Mark Ryan

MEMBER FOR MORAYFIELD

Hansard Wednesday, 10 March 2010

MOTION: HEALTH SYSTEM

Mr RYAN (Morayfield—ALP) (6.10 pm): I rise to oppose the opposition's motion and to speak in support of the amendment moved by the Deputy Premier. The opposition's motion says a great deal about its depth of health policy. The opposition's motion will do nothing to help Queenslanders. It will do nothing to support health reform in Queensland. When it comes to policy debate, the members opposite will say anything, will oppose everything and will do nothing. They stand for nothingness. The opposition is devoid of ideas.

An opposition member: You're giving it away.

Mr RYAN: I take that interjection, because the louder they squawk the clearer it is that they stand for nothingness. They have nothing to offer. On the other hand, the Bligh government has engaged constructively in discussions with the Rudd government and we will continue to work with the federal government to ensure Queensland gets the best deal out of the national health reform process.

So far, the contributions to this debate by members of the opposition have been particularly unconstructive. They continually snipe at the Prime Minister and this government's record of health service delivery. With all the important issues existing in Queensland today, all the opposition can present to us is a motion about cabinet procedure.

The opposition needs to stand up and be counted on health policy. Where does it stand on the Commonwealth dental scheme, which has been blocked by its federal counterparts in the Senate? Has any member of the opposition picked up the phone and asked Tony Abbott to let the changes pass? Do members of the opposition support those senators who have refused to pass the Commonwealth dental scheme, which will deliver 180,000 extra occasions for service for Queensland? Tony Abbott refuses to stand up for Queenslanders who are in need of dental care. When will the opposition stand up for Queenslanders? Where do they stand on Tony Abbott's record of pulling \$1 billion out of the health system while he was health minister—a disgraceful record? Tony Abbott refused to stand up for the Queensland health system. When will the opposition stand up for Queenslanders?

Where does the opposition stand on the Prime Minister's offer to pay 100 per cent of specialist outpatient and primary health services? Tony Abbott continually criticises the health reforms proposed by the Prime Minister which will deliver real results for Queenslanders. When will the opposition stand up for Queenslanders? It has no new ideas, no policy and this motion shows the opposition up. One of the most significant national conversations in our history is taking place right now on health reform and the opposition has skipped town. It has taken a leave pass. Instead of contributing, it is focused on procedure and the past.

In the Bligh government, health policy is run by the Premier and the Deputy Premier and Minister for Health, not by bureaucrats or party officials. In the Rudd government, health policy is run by the Prime Minister and the health minister, not by bureaucrats or party officials. It was the same in the Goss government. Kevin Rudd was a public servant—a senior one—but in Labor governments it is the responsible minister and the head of the government who are responsible for policy. This motion shows that in the LNP that is not the case. The Leader of the Opposition has famously said that it is not his job to

come up with policy. We know that the shadow minister for health has come up with no new policy ideas since the failed mental health policy that relied on volunteers. It is just the same old Nationals offering the same old thing and that certainly does not include policy or ideas.

Instead of carping, squawking and opposing everything as a disguise for their lack of capacity to propose viable policy alternatives, the opposition members need to get serious about policy development. The last time the people of the Morayfield-Caboolture area heard anything of substance from the opposition in respect of health policy, they were gobsmacked by its disastrous consequences. After promising and failing to build a hospital at Caboolture for four election campaigns, the National Party decided to go further by downgrading the stage 2 expansion of the Caboolture Hospital as part of its infrastructure freeze during the Borbidge government years. That decision effectively cut the planned stage 2 hospital expansion in half. The people of the Morayfield-Caboolture area have been forced to live with that decision ever since. The people of the Morayfield-Caboolture area want the opposition to stop playing politics with health and start standing up for Queenslanders.