




Speech by

Dr Chris Davis

MEMBER FOR STAFFORD

Hansard Wednesday, 31 October 2012

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL AND APPROPRIATION BILL: LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

 **Dr DAVIS** (Stafford—LNP) (6.18 pm): I was concerned at the estimates hearing on 17 October to be the subject of assertions by the member for Bundamba. The chair of the Health and Community Services Committee, the member for Redlands, deemed that these assertions impugned me. I thank him for obtaining a withdrawal accordingly. However, I did not have an opportunity to reply to the assertions, so it is opportune that under the legal affairs discussions tonight I assert my right to the first principle of natural justice, specifically the right to be heard.

The statement from the member for Bundamba as it appears in *Hansard* of 17 October, page 54, mentions 'the assistant minister's antagonism towards the new Queensland Children's Hospital and with his obvious conflict of interest'. Well, I do have an antagonism to bad health services planning, because it risks patients' lives, denies the opportunity for optimal health and wastes scarce health resources.

Is the new Queensland Children's Hospital a bad plan? The latest instalment on that question was as recent as the *Courier-Mail* of 27 October, when an eminent paediatrician and recently retired medical superintendent of Brisbane's Royal Children's Hospital described it as a bad plan—so bad that what started life as a \$690 million project is now quoted at \$1.5 billion and, according to Dr Slaughter, will make the \$2 billion mark. So when we look at estimates, this is yet another example of the frightful legacy of grossly irresponsible waste by the former Labor government. One can hopefully understand my antagonism to such incompetence and waste. As members of this government will understand, if the previous government could not even get the basic bricks and mortar right, there was no proper consideration of the complex service planning that should underpin a critical decision to close the Royal Children's Hospital, with its vital links to the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital and all of the world-class teaching and research investments on the Herston campus and indeed all of the needs of the north side of Brisbane, including my seat of Stafford.

The member for Bundamba asserted that I have a conflict of interest in relation to the Queensland Children's Hospital. My wife is a paediatric neurologist at the Royal Children's Hospital. She is one of the very many consultants and other healthcare professionals who are totally opposed to the process by which the purely political decision to relocate all paediatric services from the Royal Children's Hospital site to the electorate of the former member for South Brisbane and later Premier was made. This is not a conflict of interest for me. She and her colleagues are more than able to advocate for the best interests of their patients without my involvement, as again so well demonstrated by Dr Slaughter's media statements a few days ago.

My conflict of interest in relation to the Queensland Children's Hospital goes back to my commitment to uphold the recommendations of the 2005 Queensland Health Systems Review, the Forster review. That specifically requires that all future decisions regarding the location of health facilities be based on a transparent patient focused process that ensures wide community and stakeholder involvement together

with relevant advice from technical experts. All decisions should be supported by full documentation to enable independent review and ensure accountability and probity of decisions. We know very well that no sooner had the Labor government welcomed and accepted the Forster report than it started to systematically ignore recommendations that did not serve ALP members' interests. Specifically, if you wanted to put a massive hospital in Anna Bligh's electorate, to hell with good governance that would serve the public interest! I am pleased that the member for Bundamba used the estimates process to identify that I remain opposed to monuments to bad planning and I confirm that I will continue to fight for the public interest, even if the Labor Party chooses to call it a conflict of interest.