



Speech by


**Desley Scott**

**MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE**

Hansard Wednesday, 20 June 2012

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## **HEALTH AND HOSPITALS NETWORK AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL AND HEALTH LEGISLATION (HEALTH PRACTITIONER REGULATION NATIONAL LAW) AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mrs SCOTT** (Woodridge—ALP) (4.55 pm): I am happy to be able to speak today in favour of the Health and Hospitals Network and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, which is to be renamed the Hospital and Health Boards Act. This bill will support the new national health funding arrangements and bring Queensland into line with all other states under the National Health Reform Agreement. Along with increased Commonwealth funding, this will ensure that there is greater transparency and accountability. The bill will accomplish a number of important reforms. The size of Queensland Health is such that it has become a cumbersome entity for centralised administration. The division of the state into 17 individual health and hospital regions with a governing board will focus on the needs of local areas and—it is hoped—will become more responsive when waiting times blow out, when there may be outbreaks of specific illnesses, when staffing problems arise and it will shoulder responsibility for facilities and resources. I must say that I have reservations about the oversight and employment of staff, which will be transferred to the board only after it has proved its capability to the minister and the role has been prescribed by regulation. However, all negotiations on pay and conditions will remain with the chief executive on a state-wide basis, requiring an amendment to the Industrial Relations Act.

I was pleased to hear the minister refer to senior nurse practitioners as one initiative to deal with many patients who otherwise may have longer wait times. These highly trained nurse practitioners are capable of case managing patients who may have a chronic illness if regular appointments are necessary and they are able to spend extra time with a patient to guide them in managing their illness—but will be overseen by a specialist—and so many other procedures. One group of practitioners that is of concern to me is the midwives, in particular those within the Logan-Beaudesert region. The practice requires one or two of the same midwives who are trained to a very high level providing care right through a pregnancy, during labour and birthing and then for six weeks following the birth. Their focus is on young mothers, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and other women who would be considered vulnerable such as those who may have mental health issues, drug and alcohol problems or be socially disadvantaged.

My daughter-in-law gave birth to two of my grandchildren in Logan Hospital and the care given was first class. However, there are many in the Logan area who are not so fortunate to have a supportive husband or partner, extended family and no negative indications. The number of births at Logan is one of the highest in the state and those who would benefit from the guidance and support of a midwife is also very high. However, although it is demonstrable that those who have the benefit of a midwife experience lower medical intervention rates and the outcomes for newborns and their mums are excellent, we have seen a decline in the number of midwives on staff.

Indeed, the number of midwives has fallen from 14 to now just three permanent and two temporary midwives. Beaudesert Hospital was to have midwives support rural women. There is just one to support the entire catchment area. A steering committee comprising representatives from Maternity Coalition, Australian College of Midwives Queensland and Midwives Australia was to be established but that has

simply not happened. There has been no sign of an external review of the Logan-Beaudesert maternity services to establish best practice services, indicating a lack of commitment. I hope that this important service will receive the minister's urgent attention.

Logan Hospital has a very multicultural clientele. It is most important that they continue to work in a very culturally sensitive way. Within this bill is a requirement that hospital and health boards respond to community and clinical needs. Along with wait times, serving the multicultural community is one of the unique aspects of serving our Logan community. Our hospital and health board will also establish an executive committee, which will oversee clinical and community engagement. I recently met with the Medicare Local for my area at its Eight Mile Plains office, and I thank Tas and his staff for a very comprehensive and positive overview. Commonwealth and state funding will be placed in a central fund and an administrator will be appointed to oversee funding arrangements.

On a recent visit to Logan Hospital with the shadow minister for health and housing, Jo-Ann Miller, I was able to once again view the excellence in procedures and clinical practice which is the hallmark at Logan. Dr Jennifer King took us on a tour of the facility and then gave us a very detailed briefing, both on issues facing the administration and on the updated plans for its major expansion program.

While Logan is a very busy hospital which at times is faced with demand which stretches its resources, staff morale is high and their clinical practice is exceptional. My office receives many calls commending staff on the level of care given and about the high degree of competency of medical staff. The expansion program will see a new expanded emergency department in a new purpose-built block; an additional 18 adult and 12 children's emergency treatment spaces; a dedicated family-friendly children's emergency waiting room; six children's outpatient consultancy rooms; eight children's short-stay beds; improved site access, with a new additional entrance to the ED; an extra 14 overnight beds in the new 18-bed children's inpatient unit, including four 23-hour beds; an adult 23-hour ward; an adult day surgery unit, which includes two procedure rooms and six recovery spaces; a subacute rehabilitation ward, including 24 rehab beds and rehab infrastructure; and workplace facilities for medical and other staff.

I would also like to commend two other important institutions at Meadowbrook adjacent to the hospital. I recently toured our Metropolitan South Institute of TAFE, Logan campus. While I have visited this campus many times, this time I, along with the member for Waterford, viewed the hospital practice unit where students do their training for enrolled nursing. It is a superb facility with several wards set up with 'patients' in bed with various ills and injuries. It is extremely lifelike and is able to give student nurses real, practical experience. This specialised unit will serve more than the TAFE students as other learning institutions discover how valuable a learning tool this facility is.

I wish to also commend the Logan campus of Griffith University for the partnership they have with Logan Hospital and their excellence in learning. Many of their student nurses may be found at Logan Hospital gaining valuable practical experience and also being mentored into this most caring of professions.

It is the case that excellence breeds excellence, and many of our Logan City doctors and nurses, as well as our other staff, treat their positions as special callings and go way beyond the call of duty. I experienced this on a number of occasions when my father was taken into emergency just last year and can attest to the high level of medical care provided.

Logan is a city which is experiencing considerable growth, both from infill as well as from planned future developments. Our hospital needs to keep up with demand now and into the future. I hope that the new hospital administrative plans, along with increased Commonwealth funding, will assist in giving this state improved health and hospital services.

I would like to thank the minister for his personal call regarding the appointment of Mr Terry White to the position of chair of the health and hospital board taking in the Logan district. I had expected to be contacted by Mr White regarding his appointment and his plans for the area, and I look forward to his call. I will be supporting the bill.