



Speech by

## Hon. Geoff Wilson

MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE

Hansard Tuesday, 14 February 2012

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### MOTION: PRIVATE HEALTH INSURANCE REBATE



**Hon. GJ WILSON** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Health) (5.46 pm): I move the following amendment—

That all words after 'House' be deleted and the following words inserted—

'notes the federal Labor government's plans to:

- Invest more than \$3 billion in extra funding into the Queensland public health system through the national health reform partnerships,
- Invest in capital to help deliver hospital upgrades in SEQ, Toowoomba, Wide Bay, Bundaberg, Rockhampton, Mackay, Townsville, Cairns, Torres Strait, and western Queensland, under the national health reform partnerships; and
- Direct funding for an extra 180,000 public dental procedures into Queensland's public dental health services, but which was blocked by the LNP in the Senate.

Further, that the House notes that the LNP has opposed the national health reforms that provide for additional federal funding in Queensland and represents a reinvestment of the proceeds of the Commonwealth's plan to reduce the private health insurance rebate.'

Working together, the Gillard and Bligh Labor governments are reforming the way health services are provided in our state. The health reform partnership will smash the status quo, breaking up Queensland Health into local health networks and delivering more funding and new services right across Queensland. And the LNP has always been against it. The health reform deal negotiated by the Premier at COAG is already delivering more beds. It will deliver faster emergency care and more elective surgery sooner and closer to home for Queenslanders.

The member for Caloundra has described the deal as 'flawed'. Well, the deal delivers faster emergency care, more emergency bays and more emergency physicians at QEII Hospital in southern Brisbane. The members for Yeerongpilly and Sunnybank support it; the LNP does not. It delivers more elective surgery, upgraded equipment and shorter surgery wait times at the RBWH in northern Brisbane. The members for Brisbane Central and Ashgrove support it; the LNP does not. It delivers new subacute beds, with better rehabilitation care, in Townsville. The members for Mundingburra and Townsville support it; the LNP does not. It delivers more emergency department expansions at Redcliffe and Caboolture. The members for Redcliffe, Morayfield and Pumicestone support it; the LNP does not.

If the LNP were in government in Queensland, this historical health reform would never have happened. You do not get to cherry pick. The Gillard government has a policy of investing record new funding into Queensland's public hospitals. It has a policy of investing more money in our public dental health clinics. It has a policy of building new cancer centres in regional Queensland. It has a policy of building new emergency departments for fast emergency care. And it has a policy of subsidising private health cover for families who earn up to \$258,000 per year but allowing families who earn more than a quarter of a million a year to pay their fair share so that that money can instead be invested in better health services, not just for the poor, not just for the middle-income earners, but for everyone.

Campbell Newman unveiled the LNP's infrastructure plan for Queensland—not one new bed, not one new ward, not one new hospital expansion. Those opposite are all silent now, aren't they? They have

nothing to crow about on the other side now, have they, with an empty infrastructure plan? What is the use of an infrastructure plan that does not include a single new piece of hospital infrastructure?

The only fully costed, fully funded health commitment the LNP has made is to slash \$400 million from the budget for the Sunshine Coast University Hospital. The LNP's infrastructure plan is about as helpful as a bankrupt tunnel and as broken as a Campbell Newman rates freeze. Just this morning the member for Caloundra stood in the House and criticised the Bligh government for delivering new emergency departments across Queensland. He does not support the PA Hospital expansion. He does not support the Townsville Hospital expansion. He does not support the ED expansion in Cairns or that at Logan or at QEII or at Prince Charles or at Ipswich or at Redlands or at Toowoomba. Is it any wonder the colleagues of the member for Caloundra keep calling for a new shadow health minister? Is it any wonder the LNP will not build new health infrastructure when they do not support the federal health reforms that helped to pay for it?

Those opposite are a policy vacuum. They have no plans for health. They admit that they have no health policies whatsoever. Nearly two years ago they called for policy ideas on emergency treatment but went for more than a year without announcing any outcomes. In the end, when Mr Newman became leader he promptly announced that their already blank slate was to be wiped clean. Mr Newman and the LNP have made an art form of avoiding plans or announcing policies. On his trip through regional Queensland last year—Mackay, Mareeba, Gladstone and other places—he failed to mention any new plan for health.

The LNP should stay out of the federal health debate given the debacle that is their position on federal health funding for dental health services. They opposed in the Senate the \$52 million that the federal government wanted to provide to Queensland for an extra 180,000 treatments for Queenslanders. Given their failure to support federal funding for health in Queensland, they have no credibility. They have no policy on public health services and no plans for Queensland. And now we know that they have no plan B for when Kate Jones wins Ashgrove. It is no wonder they cannot say what their plans are for health services; they do not know who their leader will be.

*(Time expired)*