




Speech by
Jackie Trad

MEMBER FOR SOUTH BRISBANE

Hansard Thursday, 23 August 2012

QUEENSLAND TUBERCULOSIS CONTROL CENTRE

 **Ms TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (3.06 pm): I rise to make a contribution to an important public health issue. In doing so I want to reflect on the Newman government's unthinking decision to close the Queensland Tuberculosis Control Centre located at the PA Hospital in my electorate of South Brisbane. The decision to close the TB centre is an international disgrace. It is a retrograde step that will harm the health of people right across the state. This decision is the most dangerous example of those opposite seeking to take Queensland backwards. According to the Queensland Health website—

Queensland Tuberculosis Control Centre ... is a centre of excellence for research and treatment for tuberculosis in Queensland.

The vision of the Queensland Tuberculosis Control Centre is to work towards the eradication of tuberculosis by ensuring all cases in Queensland are diagnosed and treated quickly and effectively

However, the Queensland Health site now comes with a warning—

... this unit ... has been informed that consultation has now commenced to relocate all clinical and public health functions of this unit for TB control to the 17 Health and Hospital Services.

We cannot, therefore, guarantee that we can honour any commitments made beyond the 30-09-2012 ...

This is not a decentralisation strategy; this is a deprioritisation strategy from the man who gave us the term 'de-necessary'. This announcement is a direct attack on Queensland's public health system and on patients around Queensland. The TB centre—

Mr Stevens: It was such a success!

Ms TRAD: It was such a success. I do take that interjection from the Manager of Government Business. Queensland will no longer have a state-wide targeted and consistent response to the spread of tuberculosis, which will no doubt lead to an increase in TB cases. Those opposite do not have to take my word on this issue. This is not some crazy, hypothetical situation. Internationally, we have seen that when governments no longer invest in public health prevention there is a spread of diseases, particularly in the case of TB. In 1975 the New York city cut funding to its TB control program and, as a direct result, it was reported that over 89 per cent of patients discharged from some hospitals were lost in the follow-up and did not complete their treatment. Consequently, New York experienced a TB epidemic with TB rates rising every year between 1978 and 1992. It is estimated that cuts to funding resulted in an additional 52,000 cases of TB than would have been the case had funding continued to exist. While the Newman government's refusal to invest in prevention and research may save money in this year's budget, there is no doubt that it will result in a much larger cost down the road, although that is what this government does best: short-sighted, misguided and unthinking decisions.