




Speech by

Jo-Ann Miller

MEMBER FOR BUNDAMBA

Hansard Tuesday, 30 October 2012

MOTION: HEALTH, COMMONWEALTH FUNDING

 **Mrs MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (12.31 pm): This motion is nothing more than the politics of self-preservation from a government that has the stench of decay about it after only seven months in government. I believe that this government is rotten to the core. The Minister for Health has come into this House today and made statements about the federal government's health funding that are not the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. The truth about health funding is that the state government has cut funding to health services across the length and breadth of this state and is now seeking to put the blame on the federal government for its own inability to provide services to some of Queensland's most vulnerable citizens. They are also seeking to hide behind the regional health boards, blaming them for the cuts to services and failing to take responsibility for the funding they have provided to the boards. Someone has to take responsibility in this House and that person is the Minister for Health. That is him. He sits above all of the hospital boards in Queensland. Maybe he needs to be reminded of that.

During the debate on the Health and Hospitals Network and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 we warned that this is exactly what would happen. We also said that we would not allow this government to get away with it—and let me tell honourable members we will not. Whether the minister likes it or not, the minister is responsible to this parliament for all of the decisions of the health boards. He is responsible to the people of Queensland.

The truth is that the federal government has actually increased health funding to Queensland this financial year. In fact, that increase is to the tune of \$107 million on last financial year's funding. That brings the federal government's health funding for Queensland to \$3.11 billion this financial year. So there is no cut to funding per Queenslanders. Of course, the population figures that the minister is using are very cleverly calculated to put his argument in the best light, but they are not consistent and they do not reflect reality. The reality is that Queensland's population is not growing; the rate is not what has been previously forecast and the federal government's figures have been revised accordingly. Let me advise that people have seen what this LNP government is like. They remember the Bjelke-Petersen years. They remember the days of corruption and they remember what it was like during all of those years of Queensland going backwards.

The Commonwealth's figures have also been reviewed because, as we are all aware, the Australian dollar has been at an all-time high and the cost of purchasing equipment is therefore cheaper. So the funding provided by the Commonwealth quite reasonably reflects this. Why would a government fund places for people who are not there? Why would a government pay for equipment at a price that does not reflect the current economic situation? If the federal government had done this, they would be attacked and chastised by other state governments, including this government's LNP mates in New South Wales and Victoria because they would be complaining about the funding in relation to their own particular states.

The health minister has moved this motion to draw attention away from a government that is clearly in disarray. Ever since the estimates hearing, the government has been looking for distractions to draw the community's attention away from the failings. What a distraction we saw last week in the electorate of the member for Sandgate. The member for Sandgate put on the best Mavis Bramston performance I have

seen since the sixties. There she was in her big hat with the gigantic sunglasses on hiding in the crowd as the Deputy Prime Minister was there standing up for the people of Eventide. There she was in the big hat doing the best Mavis Bramston impression I have ever seen. Where was the member for Lytton? Let me tell you where I reckon he was. He was contacting his casting agent so he could be in the new series of *Little Britain*. Maybe you were at the casting agents trying to be the new Jonah of *Summer Heights High*, because that will be the level that you will be at my friend—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member will speak through the chair.

Mrs MILLER: When the people of Sandgate are finished with the temporary member for Sandgate and when the people of Wynnum are finished and get even with the temporary member for Wynnum, they will have nothing left to do but to put on performances on TV.

The people of Queensland can see a political trick for what it is. They are not duped by the sleight of hand. They are not duped by the shiny balls that are thrown into the air. Believe me, they smell a Gambian rat when they see or smell one. For the benefit of the members of this House, a Gambian rat is the largest breed of rat in the world and there was a plague of them in Florida Keys earlier this year. There they go—sniffing the rats on the LNP side.

Let us look at the facts. What did the federal government's midyear economic and fiscal outlook reveal? It revealed that Queensland receives health funding from both the federal and state governments; that the federal government's funding will increase by 21 per cent over the next four years of the forward estimates; the state government's funding will increase by only 12.9 per cent over the same period; the health funding provided by the Commonwealth government to Queensland over the forward estimates is \$13.53 billion; and the increase to the Commonwealth's health funding for Queensland over the forward estimates is \$650 million.

Ms Trad interjected.

Mr Symes interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for South Brisbane and the member for Lytton will cease interjecting.

Mrs MILLER: Tell me if I am wrong, but an increase of \$650 million over four years and an increase of \$107 million this year cannot be a decrease. See what I have done there? It is really easy. I have compared last year's funding with this year's funding and worked out that there is a positive difference. So I have called that an increase. It is not hard, it is not tricky; it is just the facts.

While we are talking about the facts, let us talk about Eventide. Last week the member for Sandgate put on her best of Kath and Kim. Up the back of the audience she was at Eventide, hiding away in the crowd. No-one even knew she was there. What did she say? She repeated the mantra of the health minister: 'This is not a political decision. Oh, my dear, no.' Yeah, but she never went up the front with those poor bureaucrats who were there. Like lambs to the slaughter they were. No, you were hiding up the back. Shame on you, member for Sandgate! Shame on you!

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Bundamba, I have already warned you about speaking through the chair. This is the last time I will.

Mrs MILLER: Shame on the member for Sandgate. Let us talk about the closure of the TB clinic. I am absolutely delighted that the health minister saw the light. That was because he had a lot of specialists bashing him around the head for closing it down. He had no choice but to reopen the TB clinic. I think it is good that he did it, because he knew that *Four Corners* last night would be talking about TB. Why are they pointing the sword at the head of the TB clinic, Dr Tom Konstantinos? It is absolutely shocking.

I will mention other failures. At the John Tonge Centre forensic chemists and forensic toxicologists have been sacked. In relation to breast cancer screening, I bet the health and hospital boards will decrease services. I also mention Wynnum Hospital. They have a vacant member for Wynnum here. Then there is the sacking of Queensland's public health nutritionists. It is a disgrace.

(Time expired)