




Speech by
Jon Krause

MEMBER FOR BEAUDESERT

Hansard Wednesday, 20 June 2012

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

 **Mr KRAUSE** (Beaudesert—LNP) (9.57 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Health and Hospitals Network and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and the Health Legislation (Health Practitioner Regulation National Law) Amendment Bill. I support the bills, primarily because they will give back to local communities the ability to have a say in how their hospitals are run, to exercise some control over the way that their hospitals are budgeted and the services that are offered at those hospitals. In my electorate of Beaudesert we have two hospitals: the Beaudesert Hospital and the Boonah Hospital. They are both exceptional facilities that are staffed by very dedicated people who, in the past decade or so, have worked and continue to work under very trying circumstances. I congratulate Terry White on his appointment as chairman of the Metro South Regional Hospital and Health Board and also Mary Corbett on her appointment as chairman of the West Moreton Regional Hospital and Health Board. The West Moreton Regional Hospital and Health Board will take in the Boonah Hospital and the Metro South Regional Hospital and Health Board will take in the Beaudesert Hospital. The Beaudesert Hospital, in particular, suffered under the Labor government in the past decade or so.

Boonah Hospital is a fantastic little hospital but it is really the Beaudesert Hospital which has suffered to a greater extent. I take my hat off to the hardworking staff in both of these hospitals who have continued to serve the community in circumstances of reduced funding and reduced facilities. They have seen the transformation of their hospitals from vibrant community health centres to something much less due to the neglect of the former government. I look forward, under this act and under the stewardship of the new government, to both of these hospitals being reinvigorated.

I make note of the health minister's decision, announced at the Rural Doctors Association of Queensland conference on 10 June, that maternity services will recommence at the Beaudesert Hospital in July 2014. I thank the health minister for making this decision and for having the courage and the determination to put back a service which was of great benefit to the Beaudesert community before it was wound down by the former government in 2002. I commend him on his decision. It follows years of lobbying the former government by the Beaudesert community, the council and many different task forces and the taking up of petitions which thousands of people signed—and there was more than one—which were duly ignored by the Labor government at the time.

I thank the health minister for making that decision. I look forward to working with him through the health board and other frameworks to have obstetric services resumed in Beaudesert in 2014. It was a decision made in 2002 that saw services cut in Beaudesert. It was not just services that were cut; equipment was also shipped out of the hospital and sent to other hospitals. Equipment in the Beaudesert Hospital for which the local community raised funds over many years was shipped out. When services were cut and employees left and were not replaced by Queensland Health—this was under the stewardship of Labor—the equipment was shipped out of the hospital and taken to other hospitals.

The Beaudesert community suffered. The Beaudesert community had worked for years to build a hospital which served their community well and it was taken away from them by the Labor government. I thank the health minister for his decision to restore services at that hospital.

I refer to an article in *Country Life* of 14 June 2012. It refers to the decision by the health minister to restore maternity services in Beaudesert. I will read some of that article. Former Scenic Rim Regional Council deputy mayor and now head of the Scenic Rim Health Task Force, Dave Cockburn, said—

... there would be dancing in the streets of Beaudesert when women and their families from the district hear they will be able to have babies in their own community within two years.

...

Mr Cockburn said the reinstatement of Beaudesert's birthing unit had been a real team effort by the community and key people like local GP and RDAQ representative Dr Michael Rice and Queensland branch president of the Australian College of Midwives Professor Hazel Brittain, who worked with the former Labor Government and engaged the former LNP Opposition about the critical importance of reopening the Beaudesert maternity unit.

'At its peak, Beaudesert was the busiest rural maternity unit in Queensland—it should never have been shut,' he said.

'This is a huge day for Beaudesert, the second fastest growing local government area in Queensland—and it's a significant day for the State, because it's a genuine sign the LNP Government is committed to getting rural health right.'

That is the crux of this bill. We are not only committed to getting rural health right; we are also committed to getting the system right across the whole of Queensland. After years of lobbying by the Beaudesert community and after an empty promise in this House from the former health minister, Paul Lucas, just over two years ago that maternity services would be restored, it took a change in government—an LNP government—for this decision to be made. The LNP government listens to the Beaudesert community. We will continue to listen to the Beaudesert community into the future as we implement this and other decisions.

Mr Choat: They now have an attentive member.

Mr KRAUSE: I take that interjection. They do now have the attention of a very attentive member—a local member who is dedicated to serving their community and not engaging in any other dalliances around the state.

Local boards set up by this act will have local people on them. Local people always have the interests of their communities at heart. That is why this is an important step for the life of my communities in Beaudesert and Boonah. The establishment of boards at the regional and local level is about ensuring a bureaucracy heavy with Brisbane based bureaucrats cannot ignore Beaudesert, cannot ignore Boonah and cannot ignore other regional communities like those in Nanango, Kingaroy and many others.

Mr Johnson: Don't forget Gregory, will you?

Government members interjected.

Mr KRAUSE: Like the communities in the electorate of Gregory and the communities in the electorates of Callide, Warrego and even Cairns. Toowoomba South is quite regional, too, I imagine.

This legislation is about ensuring that the bureaucracy cannot forget local regional communities like they did before. I commend this bill to the House. Regional boards are just the start. I mentioned the chairmen of the Metro South board, Terry White, and the West Moreton board, Mary Corbett, but regional boards are just the start. I look forward to the implementation of the provisions in this bill which energise local hospital boards to represent local areas and to have real input into the way their local hospitals are run. I commend the bill to the House and thank the minister again for his important decision, the important milestone, of announcing the restoration of services at Beaudesert Hospital.