




Speech by

Mark McArdle

MEMBER FOR CALOUNDRA

Hansard Tuesday, 14 February 2012

HEALTH SYSTEM

 **Mr McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (11.50 am): Today the Premier made the comment that this House should not forget history, and she is right. The history of health in this state, however, should never be forgotten. It has been an abomination under this government and the Beattie government for 20 of the last 22 or 23 years that this state has been ruled by Labor.

Let us go back to the very sad consequences of what occurred in Bundaberg not all that long ago and what lessons have been learned from that. Let us consider Gordon Nuttall, who was a health minister who misled an estimates committee and had to be rescued by this government but who is now serving time in jail. Let us consider the issue of the Health payroll system. It cost this state \$67 million to implement a new payroll system that was not checked and that was in no way audited before it went live in March of last year. That situation is now costing \$220 million to correct.

The greatest tragedy in relation to the payroll debacle is the impact it has had on nurses, doctors and Queensland Health employees right across the state. The emotional trauma—the tragedy—of not being able to make payments on mortgages or leases, put food on the table, meet school fees and meet day-to-day living expenses will live in the minds of these men and women for many years to come. The financial burden imposed upon the people of this state is bad enough, but the emotional and psychological trauma impacting the many people who worked for Queensland Health over a long period of time will linger forever.

We then also have the process for recovery of overpayments that began some time in the middle of last year with a letter written by Queensland Health seeking recovery of funds in a process that was mean, that did nothing to indicate sorrow or regret, that was cold and calculating. I have spoken to many nurses in relation to the payroll debacle and they have said to me that when that letter hit their letterboxes it brought it all back to them. It brought back the fact that they would go to bed on a Tuesday night before a Wednesday payday wondering if they would get any pay at all, let alone some pay. The reargitation of that emotional turmoil is still reverberating today right across the health system in this state.

Let us move on to the issue of ramping and access block to hospitals. I turn first to ramping. On 26 September 2011 some 23 ambulances were ramped outside the PA Hospital. I table a copy of a photo that appeared in the *Courier-Mail*.

Tabled paper: Photograph of ambulances [\[6437\]](#).

Paramedics were waiting outside the back door of the ED at the PA unable to get out and deal with 000 emergency calls to save the lives of other Queenslanders. We have the issue of access block that has continued to grow right across this state, and both of those factors impose serious constraints and can have serious consequences on the lives of Queenslanders who use our public health system. This government's approach was to build bigger EDs. That was purportedly the answer to the problem that has plagued this government and the public health system for many years. Building bigger EDs, as we have said on many occasions, does nothing more than create larger areas to plant people—to have people waiting on trolleys or chairs for placement within the public health system.

Then there is the issue of the waiting list for the waiting list. The last published data by Queensland Health reveals that there are some 200,000 people on the waiting list for the waiting list. Queensland Health and the minister trumpet elective surgery waiting lists, but the elective surgery waiting lists in isolation do not give an accurate picture of the waiting lists in this state. It is the waiting lists for the waiting lists that also need to be revealed. I also suspect that there is another waiting list, given that last year we saw from the Gold Coast Hospital referrals from GPs being returned to those doctors saying, 'Tell your patient we can't help them. We can't put them on a waiting list.' So there is another waiting list. There is another waiting list that this government is not prepared to publish, and that is the list on the never-never!

(Time expired)