




Speech By
Jo-Ann Miller

MEMBER FOR BUNDAMBA

MOTION: QUEENSLAND HEALTH, PAYROLL SYSTEM

 **Mrs MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (11.10 am): I move—

That all words after 'That this House' be deleted and replaced with:

'calls on the Newman government to immediately address the recommendations of the \$5 million Chesterman inquiry and notes the Newman government's massive cuts to hospitals and health services.'

Opposition members: Shame!

Mrs MILLER: Shame! The opposition also notes the report of the Queensland Health Payroll System Commission of Inquiry. We note that this inquiry, at a cost of \$5 million, has not found anything that was not already known. It should be noted by every member of this House that the \$5 million that was spent on this royal commission could have employed the equivalent of around 100 graduate nurses.

We also note that this report has not found—we have to be clear on this—that any former ministers had any case to answer. That is why everybody over there is so upset. That is why they cannot believe that this report, costing \$5 million, has not come out with the recommendations that they wanted. Clearly, we all have to understand and accept that, as found in this report, there has been poor administrative practice by a number of public servants. We all understand that and we accept that. However, if Premier Newman chooses to go on a witch-hunt with regard to those former public servants, that is his business alone. We know that this government's members have become experts on witch-hunts in the Queensland Public Service not only in Queensland Health, not only in Education Queensland that I know of but also in many other departments across the state—and not only in the Public Service here in Brisbane but also in regional centres and in all smaller country towns around the state as well. We support the Public Service Commission in ensuring that we have effective and well-managed government agencies and departments. We will always support that. We always believe that these government agencies, including Queensland Health, need to be adequately resourced, which means that they need to have the money but they also need to have the manpower to meet their responsibilities to the people of Queensland.

The staff cuts and the service closures that are the hallmark of the first year of this LNP government undermine the effectiveness of our public health services. That is clear. Everywhere that I travel across this state one of the first things that I am asked about is the health cuts and closures. That is why they describe the Minister for Health as the 'minister for health cuts and closures', because that is what they see him doing across the length and breadth of this state. No matter where I am, whether I am talking about housing issues, mines issues in various parts of Queensland or natural resources issues, which are also part of my shadow ministerial responsibility, everyone brings up Health. Let me tell honourable members why. Over many, many decades everybody in this state has come to believe in a public health system so that if they get sick, are in a traffic accident or a workplace accident, or if they have inherited a genetic disease—or whatever may be wrong—they have a public hospital system that will look after them and a public hospital system that is well funded. They want to know that their public hospital system has doctors, nurses and allied health

professionals—including radiologists, pharmacists, social workers and pathology officers—who are top class and who are there to look after them no questions asked. The biggest fear in the minds of those in our community is that they are going to have to pay to access these basic services. Many people have said to me that they are so concerned about this that it worries them sick, day and night. I have been told of cases in which the first question people are asked when they go to hospital is, 'Are you in a private medical fund?' That is the first question they are asked. I can tell members that they are living in fear of that because they know that if they are members of a private health fund and they go into the private health system, the second question they are asked is, 'What are your credit card details?' That is what normally happens in the private hospital system.

Mr Springborg: That's what you wanted to do.

Mrs MILLER: No, we did not, Minister for Health.

Mr Springborg: Yes, you did. You mentioned that before.

Mrs MILLER: You are fibbing on that. It does not matter what reports come to Queensland Health, we did not do any of that. So today you should rule out asking people about, firstly, their private health insurance and, secondly, asking people—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Robinson): Order! Members will direct their comments through the chair.

Mrs MILLER:—about credit cards. We have heard repeatedly about the Health payroll and the KPMG estimate of the total cost of the Queensland Health payroll system for the eight years between 2010-11 and the end of 2017-18. We need to look at this, and I tabled these documents last night. I think we need to table them again. So I table the answer to question on notice No. 6.

Tabled paper: Health and Community Services Committee 2013 estimates pre-hearing question on notice No. 6 [\[3178\]](#).

The important thing here is that yesterday we saw the charade of ministers saying, 'What could we do with \$1.2 billion?'—that they falsely claim is related to the Health payroll. That \$1 billion is about business as usual. That \$1 billion is about paying fortnightly our doctors, nurses, pharmacists—paying them all. The KPMG report states—

Business As Usual—the costs associated with ensuring Queensland Health employees are paid on a fortnightly basis and the system maintained (\$1,008.0m);

Basically, what these clowns opposite were talking about yesterday was ripping \$1.2 billion out—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member will withdraw those comments. They are unparliamentary.

Mrs MILLER: I withdraw. We see that they want to rip out this \$1.1 billion. If they get away with ripping that out, no doctors, nurses, social workers or radiographers will be paid. None of them will be paid because there will be no money to process their pays. They are the pure and simple facts. There will be no money there for any pays at all. So while you talk about—

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members on my right will cease interjecting and the member will speak through the chair.

Mrs MILLER: You are talking about people being incorrectly paid because of the payroll debacle, and we accept that. We know it was a debacle. But the point is that you are suggesting that they work for nothing and that they do not get paid at all. That is what you are suggesting, and it is just absolutely unbelievable. So with this \$5 million that you wasted on this Chesterman inquiry—

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Robinson): Order! The member will speak through the chair, and those on my right will cease interjecting.

Mrs MILLER: This \$5 million inquiry did not come up with what you wanted. You wanted our ministers' heads on platters like John the Baptist, and it did not happen. This \$5 million could have employed 100 graduate nurses; stopped Biala's services being closed; stopped the Barrett Centre's services being closed; and stopped the privatisation of the Sunshine, Gold Coast and Children's hospitals. But guess what? You should have an inquiry into what is happening at the Gold Coast Hospital, because when you see eminent surgeons and doctors up in arms, you know something is wrong—just like Bundaberg!

(Time expired)