




Speech By
Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE

Record of Proceedings, 4 June 2015

PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Elective Surgery, Wait-Time Guarantee

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (10.20 am): It is very interesting to hear the Leader of the Opposition talk about witness protection programs. I remember clearly my first estimates hearing in 2009 when the Leader of the Opposition came into a committee of the parliament and named someone in a witness protection program. He named someone. Of course, he was only a 20-year veteran of the parliament then or, as someone once said about his experience, one year of parliament repeated 20 times. He came into a committee of the parliament and named someone in a witness protection program. That required the *Hansard* of this parliament to be redacted to remove the name of somebody. So far be it for the Leader of the Opposition to lecture anyone.

The clock is ticking. We are at day 3. We are back in this place waiting for the documents to be revealed. Everyone in this parliament knows that what we say in this place matters. What did the Leader of the Opposition say on 19 May? He said that the wait-time program was 'a \$500 million' program. He went on to say that the wait-time program was 'properly costed'. Not done with that, the member for Southern Downs said 'the money was there'. These claims are inconsistent with the advice I and my office have received from the Department of Health.

On 2 June I informed the House that I had written to the Leader of the Opposition seeking access to documents he took as Minister for Health, in accordance with the *Queensland Cabinet Handbook* and cabinet protocols, to the cabinet and cabinet committees. The *Queensland Cabinet Handbook* states—

Ministers should ensure there is no announcement of policy initiatives or expenditure commitments which have not been given Cabinet authority or, where appropriate, Governor in Council approval.

These documents are the only way the Leader of the Opposition can prove the truth of his statement. There is only one conclusion that can be drawn if he does not produce the documents? It is not complex. It is not hard. He writes to the cabinet secretary and says, 'I authorise the release of the cabinet documents.' It is very simple. The letter is not complex. He does not have the courage to come into this House and explain his conduct. He does not explain his statement. He does not excuse it. He says nothing. It is not good enough. It is about time he brought the evidence forward.

I can tell members what would be a scandal—he talks about scandals—is if someone authorised expenditure of \$500 million without cabinet approval. What would be scandalous is if someone came into this House and claimed that there was a \$500 million project, that the money was there, that it was properly costed, that there was no authorisation for that project and that the statement in the House was not correct. It is time for the Leader of the Opposition to come forth and disclose those documents.