



Speech By  
**Hon. Cameron Dick**


**MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE**

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**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**Public Hospitals, Funding**

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (9.55 am): On Saturday in Brisbane I spoke at the AMA national conference about the Abbott government's cuts to federal funding for public hospitals. I thank the AMA for its warm reception at that conference. Currently, my department is modelling the impact that those cuts will have on hospital services in Queensland and our future health workforce. During my presentation I was able to announce some preliminary findings. My department's analysis is based on figures that were released last year by the Commonwealth Treasury, which shows the nationwide impact of the Abbott government's cuts.

Although those opposite like to pretend that the cuts do not exist, it was Joe Hockey's own department that revealed that the changes will reduce federal funding for hospitals nationwide by \$57 billion from 2017-18 to 2024-25. In its figures the Commonwealth Treasury included the yearly impact, which gets worse and worse every year because of the nature of the changes. For the benefit of the House, I point out that it will be \$1 billion in 2017-18, \$2 billion in 2018-19, and then \$4 billion, \$6 billion, \$7 billion, \$10 billion, \$12 billion and then \$15 billion for each of the years up to and including 2024-25.

My department has estimated that Queensland's share of these funding cuts on a population basis will be \$11.8 billion over that period. These funding cuts will obviously have huge implications for Queensland's future health workforce. My department has modelled the number of health jobs in Queensland that would have been funded by the amount of spending being cut by the Abbott government. The department's modelling is based on the proportion of hospital and health service costs going to doctors, nurses and health practitioners in 2013-15, which was 16 per cent for doctors, 26.5 per cent for nurses and eight per cent for health practitioners. The impact in 2017-18 is 164 doctors, 580 nurses and 165 health practitioners. By 2024-25, the impact is around 1,500 doctors, around 5,300 nurses and around 1,500 health practitioners. The average annual impact over the period from 2017-18 to 2024-25 is 818 doctors, 2,800 nurses and 824 health professionals.

At the national conference on Saturday, I thanked the AMA for championing this cause on behalf of its members but, more importantly, Australians. As doctors, they understand more than anyone that these are not just numbers in a table or a spreadsheet; we are talking about vital funds that deliver hospital services that are accessed every day by thousands of Queenslanders. We saw what happened when the previous federal Labor government made a genuine commitment to improving health care for all Australians. Elective surgery and dental long waits tumbled. If the Abbott government's cuts go ahead, we will lose all of those gains.

True to form, in this year's federal budget the Abbott government made even further cuts. It slashed the funding to be provided under the National Partnership Agreement on Adult Public Dental Services. Under this national partnership, Queensland was to receive funding of \$178 million over

three years from 2015-16 to 2017-18. However, the Abbott government has reduced that funding to just \$30 million in 2015-16 and claims that funding after this is 'subject to negotiations with the states'. This has become Tony Abbott's modus operandi for breaking election commitments and slashing health spending. Three years of certainty and \$178 million becomes just one year and \$30 million.

This is not good government. This is not the way to run federal-state relations. It is not way to run a federation and it is just further evidence that the Abbott government does not believe in a properly funded public health system.