




Speech By
Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL

Health and Ambulance Services Committee, Report

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (9.50 pm): I am delighted to contribute to this debate on the committee report by the Health and Ambulance Services Committee on the budget appropriation for the Health portfolio for the 2015-16 financial year. I thank all members for their contribution; in particular, I thank the member for Nudgee for the way she convened and managed the estimates committee hearing. I think she did a sterling job as a new chair in this parliament to manage what often is a difficult hearing because of the contested nature of ideas. I also thank the members for Greenslopes and Thuringowa for their contributions today. I particularly note the member for Thuringowa's very kind comments about my late father.

There are a few issues this year on which I want to comment and hit the highlights again of the Health budget. There is a record operating budget for Queensland Health of \$4.183 billion. This is great news for the people of Queensland, wherever they might live in this state. We have sought to restore balance in the health system in this state with significant investments in front-line services that were so badly damaged by the Liberal National Party government. There are investments in preventative health and patient safety and an additional \$2.3 billion over four years for our hospital and health services to ensure that with a growing population we can continue to deliver health and ambulance services.

I acknowledge the comments of the members for Greenslopes and Thuringowa on the No. 1 threat to our health system—the cuts to health that Tony Abbott was going to deliver, that Joe Hockey still wants to deliver as the federal Treasurer and that no doubt Malcolm Turnbull will have to reconsider because of the consequences it would have for our state. There is \$361 million over four years for our outpatient waitlist strategy. In seven months this government has reduced the waitlist for the waitlist from 100,000 to 82,000 by the application of money but also by the application of the great work of clinicians and staff in our hospitals who are dedicated to front-line service delivery and not distracted by the burden of the cuts poured on them by the previous administration.

In terms of our nursing commitments, there is \$212 million over four years involving 400 nurse navigators, senior nurses coming back into our health system. There are up to 4,000 nursing graduate positions for those new nurses. We are reinstating the school age nurse program, with 16 nurse educator positions as well after nursing was thrashed and trashed by the previous LNP government. In terms of 800 nurses and midwives—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DICK: Listen to those opposite rewriting history. Some 800 nurses and midwives were removed from the system by the previous government.

I shall make a few observations on this debate. One theme during the entire debate today on the budget and the estimates committee reports was the lack of time. All members opposite are out there

with the hourglass: 'Last year it was eight hours, 35 minutes and 62 seconds instead of nine hours, 15 minutes and two seconds.' If members opposite have to get into a process argument, they have lost the debate on the substance of a great Labor budget. That is all they are worried about—the drivel of time. What did they do in government? They fixed the system so that all estimates committee hearings occurred on the same day, at the same time, so that the government would not be subject to the scrutiny of the media and so the community would not be able to follow what was going on. What a disgrace! They stand condemned by their government.

In my estimates committee debate there was nine to one, so only 10 per cent of the questions were directed to the relevant minister. Members opposite could not even ask the minister questions. They want to complain about the system yet did not have the gumption or the guts to ask me questions about the budget. What did we hear? The absolute high point in the debate today was the member for Buderim deliberately misrepresenting what happened in the debate about the Sunshine Coast Public University Hospital and the allocation and determination of issues relating to the roadworks around that hospital. I clearly put an explanation on the record. The member for Buderim said, 'I need a clear, lengthy explanation.' He could not even read the transcript of the hearing. He did not even want to listen to the hearing, although what we were planning to do was clearly put on the record at the end of the hearing, including further examination of that issue. That is what members opposite do: LNP members never let the facts get in the way of a fabricated argument. This debate, represented here through the member for Buderim and the other members, represents the distortion of what otherwise is a terrific Labor budget that puts front-line services back into helping the people of Queensland.

(Time expired)