




Speech By
Dr Christian Rowan

MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

Record of Proceedings, 19 May 2015

MOTION: ELECTIVE SURGERY WAIT-TIME GUARANTEE

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (6.10 pm): I rise to speak about waiting list integrity and Queensland's surgical wait-time guarantee—an Australian first, a first-class commitment by the LNP to excellence and enhanced patient outcomes for Queenslanders right across this great state. Committing to Queenslanders getting their surgery or other care within clinically recommended time frames by either their local hospital or an alternative public or private hospital is visionary and innovative. For urgent patients, having been placed on the relevant waitlist, this means within 30 days and for semi-urgent patients within 90 days.

But it is not only that. Waiting list integrity is a public policy initiative which is about fairness, equity, enhanced quality of life metrics and improved wellbeing for all in Queensland. But there is also a critical economic aspect for Queensland given that the delivery of quality health care keeps Queenslanders in the workforce, ensuring a vibrant state economy. Doctors, health professionals and organisations like the Australian Medical Association have applauded and welcomed the surgical wait-time guarantee as well as waiting list integrity.

What the former LNP government was about in health, particularly in relation to waiting times, was delivering productivity, efficiency, transparency of outcomes via open reporting, improving the health and wellbeing of all Queenslanders, and ensuring value for money for the taxpayers of Queensland. Let us take a couple of practical examples.

There is the 65-year-old female pensioner who lives in the member for Mount Isa's electorate or the member for Dalrymple's electorate. She develops hip pain. She has radiological investigations. There is osteoarthritis, osteopaenia and osteoporosis. A fracture is imminent. She has worked on the family farm all her life, given her life to family, to small business and to the agricultural sector. She now has grandchildren. She is unable to get her surgery within the recommended clinical time frames. Unfortunately, she has a fracture and ends up in residential aged care. The cost to the community, to her family and to herself are enormous.

Then there is the 45-year-old male who is working in agriculture or mining or manufacturing or tourism. He develops chest pain and shortness of breath. He goes on to have investigations like coronary angiography and is referred for coronary artery bypass grafting surgery. Unable to get surgery in the clinically recommended time frame, as the wait-time surgical guarantee has been abolished, he has a heart attack and dies, leaving a young widow and children behind—in essence, a family without a husband and a father.

As the Palaszczuk government attempt to scrap the surgical wait-time guarantee and not actually commit to waitlist guarantees, what they are saying is Labor does not care about the health of Queenslanders. They are also saying they have no confidence in the general practitioners of Queensland. That is right: the Palaszczuk government does not believe in the general practitioners of

this state. General practitioners know their patients, their families and communities, and they know what is clinically needed. What GPs do not need is a state government which says to them, 'We know better than you.'

The waiting list integrity bill is a fundamental right. The Health Ombudsman, as the independent reviewer, will ensure transparency and accountability as far as data integrity is concerned. The Health Legislation (Waiting List Integrity) Amendment Bill 2015 is sound, evidence based legislation with real benefits for Queenslanders.