




Speech By
Glenn Butcher

MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Gladstone, Health Services

 **Mr BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (3.06 pm): I rise to speak on behalf of the people of my electorate of Gladstone who for many years have been calling for better hospital and healthcare facilities. The people of the Gladstone electorate deserve health services that are equal to the services offered in other regional cities and towns. They deserve to feel confident in seeking treatment at their local hospital, knowing that they can be assured that they will be offered a standard of care that is equal to that offered in a similar region.

The recent federal budget has done nothing at all for the health needs of the Gladstone region. In fact, my understanding is that, compliments of the ill-thought-through decisions made by our federal government, hospital and health facilities in Central Queensland will be \$570 million worse off over seven years—

A government member: 574.

Mr BUTCHER: I take that interjection—\$574 million. According to the Office of Economic and Statistical Research—the OESR—in 2012-13, Gladstone's growth was 4.1 per cent. In 2013-14, the figure was 3.9 per cent and the projected growth is 2.9 per cent each year for the next 20 years, which is faster than the state's average. Consequently, cutting funding to health systems in Central Queensland can be equated to short-sighted theft.

This \$574 million cut from the Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service network is part of the federal government's intention to proceed with its proposed cuts in the May budget. That means \$57 billion less for the states to administer health systems over seven years from 2018. That might seem a few years away, but my region is growing quickly and its population is ageing. So this reduction in funding will make long-term planning very difficult.

I want to see security for my people of Gladstone as they age and as they may potentially require more medical care. I want people relocating to Gladstone to be able to relocate confident in the knowledge that, should they require medical services, there will be services on offer in Gladstone that are of the same standard as those offered in areas of similar population to the Gladstone area.

The Gladstone Hospital needs urgent attention, including the reinstatement of front-line services that have declined over the years. The electorate of Gladstone has had to manage the impact of the LNG industry coming to town, and the population boom that that has caused, without a corresponding increase in infrastructure and staffing levels in health services and health care. With projected growth higher than the state average over the next 20 years, it is time to increase funding to Gladstone, not rip the heart out of our health system.