




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MACKAY

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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Mackay Base Hospital

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (11.52 am): Mackay Base Hospital has been transformed into a state-of-the-art facility with a \$408 million redevelopment, opened recently by the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services, Cameron Dick. The Mackay Base Hospital was a project that was planned for and funded by the Bligh Labor government and opened by the Palaszczuk Labor government. Labor governments care about health care in the regions.

Mackay Base Hospital is essential for the health care of not only patients in the Mackay electorate but also patients referred from Moranbah, Sarina, Proserpine and Bowen. The redevelopment has given Mackay residents a new emergency department; outpatient department; intensive care unit; day surgery; operating suites; inpatient, surgical and medical wards; renal support services; and dental, allied health and mental health facilities. New mothers and babies have also been cared for, with the refurbishment and extension of the birthing centre, delivery suites and special-care nurseries.

For the first time, patients needing angiograms and pacemakers will not have to travel to Townsville or Brisbane for treatment. The new \$2.5 million cardiac catheter laboratory provides life-saving diagnostic treatment to people with a range of heart conditions. When patients require heart surgery it is a very emotional time for both the patient and their family. Being able to stay in Mackay takes some of this emotional and financial pressure off families who in the past needed to find accommodation and had to travel to be with their loved ones.

The staff at the Mackay Base Hospital must be commended for their patience. They literally worked within a building site during the construction phase. New buildings were erected, units were moved into the new buildings and old buildings were demolished to make way for new construction. While building took place around them, the hospital remained fully functional. Health professionals were consulted on the layout of their new wings and wards. With the knowledge of these health professionals, the best possible use of space has been achieved for patient care and the ability of senior staff to train and mentor junior staff. When the health minister and I visited the hospital we were greeted by a team of staff who praised their new working environment. Patients who need an MRI no longer have to be transferred to private facilities for scanning. This is less disruptive for patients and results are produced more quickly.

It is difficult to attract and retain quality medical staff in regional centres. The attraction and retention of medical staff is most successful when staff are trained in the regions. The Mackay Education Research Centre has been built within the cluster of hospital buildings and is shared with Queensland Health, James Cook University and the Central Queensland University. This is a boost to training opportunities and employment in Mackay. The redevelopment is a forward-planning project. It has increased bed numbers and capacity from 163 to 318. The design of the buildings includes provision

for the hospital to be easily expanded with an additional wing. The hospital plan will cater for growth up until at least 2050.

Unfortunately, the federal government does not support the health needs of residents in Mackay and its surrounding electorates. Tony Abbott and the LNP have slashed \$11.8 billion from Queensland hospitals from 2017-18 to 2024-25. The Queensland Department of Health has modelled these numbers on health jobs that would have been funded by this amount of spending. The impact in 2017-18 will be that 164 doctors, 580 nurses and 165 health professionals will not come into our health system in Queensland. By 2024-25 the impact will be that approximately 1,500 doctors, 5,300 nurses and 1,500 health professionals will not come into our health system. This savage attack will see a massive cut of \$463 million from hospital funding for residents of the Mackay Hospital and Health Service region. We have a responsible state Labor government which is growing services in our regions, while the LNP government is callously ripping funding out.

(Time expired)