




Speech By
Bruce Saunders

MEMBER FOR MARYBOROUGH

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MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Maryborough Hospital, Pathology Unit

 **Mr SAUNDERS** (Maryborough—ALP) (12.14 pm): The member for Everton talks about keeping people safe. I ask: how about keeping them healthy? For the city of Maryborough, 16 May was a red-letter day because we reopened the pathology unit that had been closed by the LNP. While the member opposite talks about safety, I say: let's keep people healthy. Ours was the only hospital on the east coast of Australia without a pathology unit. That was shameful. One of the busiest parts of the Bruce Highway is between Curra and Gin Gin, but if there was an accident on the highway there was no pathology unit close by.

Reopening the pathology unit was one of my campaign promises and I congratulate the health minister for it. Shortly after getting elected, I asked the health minister, the member for Woodridge, to come to the hospital, which he did. He said, 'Where's the pathology unit?' I said, 'We haven't got one, Minister.' He said, 'Let's have a look at that.' You cannot operate a hospital without a pathology unit. The constant feedback from the LNP was, 'It's great. There's no need for it. We'll send your pathology and blood samples down to Hervey Bay.' Hervey Bay is 33 minutes away by car. The son of friends of mine became very sick in Maryborough. It was eight hours before they received the results of the pathology tests. The hypocrites on the other side of the House sit there and tell us that they—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! I ask you not to use unparliamentary language.

Mr SAUNDERS: I withdraw. The LNP members on the other side of the House tell us that they care about Queenslanders. Do they really care about Queenslanders? We did not have a pathology service! A pathology service is crucial to the operation of a hospital. It is common sense: we need pathology services. During the campaign, we heard of countless cases of sick people who had to wait for pathology results. Those results did not come. They walked out of the A&E because they could not get pathology.

The health minister came, he saw and he acted. Now we have a great pathology service. It is one of the best in Queensland. In fact, ours is the foremost pathology service in the state and it will be rolled out across the state. Maryborough is trialling the pathology service. On 16 May we reopened the pathology service. I must congratulate the head of the Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service, Adrian Pennington. Without his support and that of his board, we would not have been able to reopen the pathology service. A young lady presented herself to the A&E. In five minutes, she had the results from the pathology unit. From the time when the blood was taken to the results being received by the doctor, it was five minutes. That is great news and it compares to the six to eight hours that it used to take.

As I said, 16 May was a red-letter day. This is what the Palaszczuk government does. Not only are we restoring services to regional Queensland; we are putting jobs back into regional Queensland. The pathology service has meant two new jobs, with more to come, in the City of Maryborough. Ed

applied to work in the pathology department and he got the job. That is one more person off the unemployment list in Maryborough. Ed is very happy about that. If members look at our Facebook page, they will see photos of Ed and me going through the samples.

This is what the Palaszczuk government does and it is what a Labor government does. We restore services to people. Can members imagine a hospital without a pathology service? The members opposite told the people of Maryborough that everything would be all right. When I stood for this seat, I could not imagine that anyone could possibly believe that a hospital without a pathology service would be 'all right'. It would be like having a car without a steering wheel or tyres. I could not imagine it. Now we have it back. This is part and parcel of restoring services and it is only the start of rebuilding the Maryborough Hospital, which was sadly neglected—absolutely neglected—under the previous government.

We have reopened the pathology unit, plans are being drawn up for the new A&E department and we have introduced the nurse-to-patient ratio guarantee. This is about restoring services and jobs to regional Queensland. We heard so much from members opposite that that is what they stood for, but all Maryborough city ever got was cuts, cuts, cuts. All of those cuts were to essential services in the great city of Maryborough. I have used the service and I personally thank the health minister and Adrian Pennington from the Wide Bay health service for restoring that unit, which will benefit not only the great city of Maryborough but also surrounding towns.