




Speech By
Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE

Record of Proceedings, 10 May 2016

MOTION: CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY, INDUSTRIAL ORGANISATIONS

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (6.24 pm): Aren't they excited about the leadership change over there! That was like being flogged by a piece of wet lettuce. The new leadership team got up by only three votes. What have we had? There was complete silence from the backbench when the member for Kawana was doing his tough-guy routine and laying into the unions. He was muscling up like Popeye.

Let us get some facts on the table. I know that it is a rare thing for the member for Kawana and facts to be in the room at the same time, but let us try to get some facts on the table. The second limb of this motion is about the delay in the opening of the Sunshine Coast University Hospital. Since the LNP was in government, nothing has changed with the management structure of this project. The construction and build of the hospital is guided by a project deed that was signed by the LNP. It is still there. The project is still being managed by the Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service. The project had an independent reviewer. That independent reviewer is still there. There was a project steering committee. Guess what is happening? The project steering committee is still steering the project.

On 8 March the board made a decision to delay the target date for the opening of the hospital. Why? So it could be opened in a clinically safe manner. That is what the board has said repeatedly, and this government supports opening hospitals when they are clinically safe. I heard the Leader of the Opposition say, 'We opened a hospital.' That opening was late. Not only was the opening of the Lady Cilento Children's Hospital late; it was risky to open the hospital when the opposition did so. That hospital was not ready when the opposition opened it.

What did the report of the independent review say about the Lady Cilento Children's Hospital—that great legacy of those members opposite? It said that there was a rushed opening of that hospital which put patient safety at risk. The report described clinicians waiting around loading docks, the late delivery of clinical equipment and staff hired in the days leading up to the opening. This is a major tertiary children's hospital that was still recruiting staff days before it opened. The telephone system was not working properly. In the days before the opening there were not enough hand gel and soap dispensers throughout the building. I might be old fashioned but, to me, making sure that staff and patients are clean in hospitals by having washed hands is pretty obvious—but not obvious to those members opposite. Linen, flow meters and clinical consumables were still being sourced up to the day the hospital opened. What did the report say? It said—

... sufficient evidence existed in the June/July 2014 period and still in late October 2014, which should have raised sufficient corporate concern over November 29th 2014 being a realistic opening date.

That is the legacy of those opposite. I take up the words of the Minister for Industrial Relations, who made a fantastic contribution in this debate. She really hit the whole argument on the head. I cannot commend the member for Brisbane Central enough. This motion is a slur on the working men and women of this state and the trade unions that represent them day in, day out.

Just two Mondays ago I was out at Barcaldine with the Premier, the member for Sandgate and the member for Logan proudly recognising 125 years of the great shearers strike, standing with unions such as the Australian Workers' Union, of which I am proud to be a member, standing up for working men and women in this state. We are not afraid of trade unions. We embrace trade unions. As Bob Hawke said—

An honourable member interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, one moment, I would ask members to be more considered in their interjections.

Mr DICK: There are few civil society organisations in this nation that have done more than trade unions to improve the working life of men and women in this nation. All of the reforms that everyone takes for granted now—maternity leave, long service leave, penalty rates, which those members opposite want to strip away—have been delivered by Australian trade unions working for working men and women of this nation to make their lives better. This motion is a slur.

One would have thought that we would have heard something new from the Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. I know that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is working on the standing orders to ensure that her question is in order tomorrow. We would have thought that we would have heard a bit more from them, but it is the same old broken record from the LNP. They think they can attack trade unions when in our society trade unions preserve and protect the rights of working men and women and make their life better.