




Speech By  
**Hon. Cameron Dick**

**MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE**

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**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL**

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (10.43 pm): I am delighted to contribute to the debate on the estimates report of the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee on the appropriation for the Health and Ambulance Services portfolio for 2016-17. This debate allows me to address some deliberate misrepresentations that the members of the LNP promoted during the estimates hearing and subsequent to the estimates hearing. I want to tackle some of those issues first and foremost in my contribution.

Firstly, the LNP ran its budget estimates strategy around the bloated Queensland Public Service—how many more people we put on in the Public Service. Of course, after the estimates hearing we were then attacked by the shadow minister for health for cutting staff. If cost cutting were an event in the Rio Olympics the Newman-Nicholls government would have been gold medal performers. The member for Clayfield was the cost cutter in chief for Campbell Newman. No-one in Australia has done more to slash and burn public sector employment than the member for Clayfield. No-one has done more in Queensland's history to cut services for Queenslanders from the Health portfolio. That is his record.

When it came to the estimates for the Health portfolio, the members opposite were all over the place. I am proud to say that Queensland Health has added an additional 4,183 full-time-equivalent employees, which is a 5.4 per cent increase. The majority of that increase has been delivered in hospital and health services, which increased full-time equivalents by 3,894. Ninety-three per cent of the increase in staffing has occurred in organisations responsible for front-line service delivery. At the election we made the commitment to rebuild the front line. We are doing that with more doctors, more nurses and more allied health professionals and, as a consequence, we are getting performance. I will say a little bit more about that.

I also want to comment on the issue that the member for Surfers Paradise put forward in his contribution tonight that ministers should answer questions. Ministers are happy to answer questions at estimates hearings if they are asked questions by the opposition. On my calculation, in a hearing that started at 2 pm and finished at 6.45 pm, I was asked precisely three questions by the member for Surfers Paradise. On my calculation, on 17 occasions I intervened in the hearing to provide further information to assist the committee. Ministers are happy to answer questions, but I am not going to be criticised for not answering questions when I am not even asked a question and those members opposite cannot even be bothered.

For the member for Mount Ommaney and the member for Gaven, the estimates committee process was an exercise in taking money under false pretences. They sat there for almost five hours. The member for Mount Ommaney did not ask me or anyone related to the Health portfolio one question. The member for Gaven built himself up over almost five hours and asked one question. That is the

contribution that their electors need to know they are making to the health system. In the case of the member for Mount Ommaney, she did not even bother to ask one question, and the member for Gaven asked only one question. He was happy to comment at length on the estimates hearing, but he could not even be bothered to participate in it. This is probably one of the best funded yet laziest oppositions that we have seen in Queensland's history sitting on the other side of the chamber.

I also want to address very briefly the issue of the Health payroll. The dissenting report signed by some of the members opposite also referred to debt collection services aimed at people who were employed by Queensland Health but have since left but who were overpaid when they worked for Queensland Health. It is exactly the same payroll system that existed under the LNP that is being implemented by our Labor government. There are no changes; however, we are trying to make it more efficient. The LNP government did not implement many of the recommendations of the Health payroll royal commission. We are now trying to do that to make the system more efficient. We simply rolled over one of the contracts that the LNP government had to ensure that Queenslanders could appropriately recover money.

In all cases, we offer former staff hardship arrangements. We are always happy to ensure that they are treated fairly and properly—something that they never received from the previous government. They were more likely to be sacked than treated with fairness by those members opposite. Of course, we will continue to roll over a contract that the former LNP government entered into.

We are delivering for Queensland, with a better performance in ED, a better performance in elective surgery—a better performance across the system—and reducing the number of people waiting for an—

*(Time expired)*