




Speech By
Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE

Record of Proceedings, 10 November 2016

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Sunshine Coast University Hospital Medical School

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (9.54 am): The Sunshine Coast University Hospital and associated health precinct will bring long-term and far-reaching benefits to the Sunshine Coast region, as well as for many other Queenslanders. Every hospital of its calibre, size and capacity across Australia has an associated medical school. To establish a medical school at the Sunshine Coast University Hospital, 50 medical student places are required. Fifty is the magic number. Of course, the allocation of medical student placements is a Commonwealth responsibility. We have already secured the transfers of 35 places from an existing allocation, but we still require 15 more places.

On 4 November 2015, more than one year ago, I first wrote to the Commonwealth Minister for Education and Training, Senator Simon Birmingham, asking him to support this medical school. The Commonwealth health minister replied on 17 December 2015, acknowledging the request. Not only is the allocation of medical students a Commonwealth responsibility, so is the funding of medical student placements.

On 8 March this year, eight months ago, I wrote again to Senator Birmingham and offered to fund 50 per cent of the cost of those essential 15 new places each year during the four-year transition phase. I also advised the minister that we would guarantee a place to every one of the students graduating from the medical school in our state's intern training program, meaning more jobs for Queensland doctors. In May 2016, Minister Birmingham acknowledged that commitment, but six months later is yet to commit to the medical places. Once again I wrote to the minister, three months ago, on 3 August. I even offered to travel to Canberra to meet the minister to discuss this important proposal for the Sunshine Coast. I have received no reply; just silence. I wrote again last week and what I did get? Still no reply; just silence. Unless this matter is resolved, the Sunshine Coast University Hospital will be the only hospital of its type in Australia without a medical school.

Mr Dickson: Without a road to get there.

Mr DICK: I take the interjection from the member for Buderim. He needs to stand up for the Sunshine Coast and stand up for Queensland. This issue can only be resolved with support from the Turnbull government. A local Sunshine Coast medical school has the support of the various local stakeholders such as the Sunshine Coast Local Medical Association and Councillor Mark Jamieson, mayor of the Sunshine Coast Regional Council. This is a critical component in delivering the vision for this hospital to be a true tertiary teaching hospital. It will also have a negative impact on its ability to recruit the highest calibre staff, if we do not secure those places.

I urge the Turnbull government to support the Sunshine Coast by recognising the considerable partnership the Queensland government is willing to offer and by approving the necessary medical places immediately. Instead of interjecting and criticising, the LNP members in this House, particularly

those representing the Sunshine Coast, can show they are putting Queensland first by joining with the Palaszczuk Labor government to get the Turnbull government to approve those 15 additional places to ensure the Sunshine Coast University Hospital is a world-class teaching hospital.