



Speech By  
**Christopher Whiting**

**MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA**

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Record of Proceedings, 16 March 2016

**HEALTH LEGISLATION (WAITING LIST INTEGRITY) AMENDMENT BILL**

**Second Reading**

Resumed from 24 February (see p. 546), on motion of Mr McArdle—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mr WHITING** (Murrumbidgee—ALP) (7.39 pm), continuing: Obviously it is unusual to have my speech truncated by a number of weeks. I will touch on a couple of things again.

**Mr Rickuss:** Are you sure you have to? You don't have to.

**Mr WHITING:** I do thank members opposite for their very kind guidance in assisting me. One of the things that I did talk about is what the member for Caloundra said in his introductory speech. I note what he did say. He said that the intention was—

... to create an independent body to audit clinical waiting times and publish this information in an open and transparent way. Independent auditing and the publishing of waiting times are aimed to provide peace of mind for patients in the Queensland health system.

One of the things I thought when reading this—and obviously the phrase 'peace of mind' comes to mind—is the peace of mind that perhaps the people of Queensland would have expected to get with the opening of the Lady Cilento Children's Hospital. I refer to the advanced and rapid opening of the hospital, as has been said before; so that it was ready on time. When that was being opened, I heard from all kinds of people who were working on that project about all the things that were not going down well. I heard that there was rushing to make decisions on furniture, fittings and carpet. The word was that they did not care; it had to be finished and opened by a deadline. I am quite familiar with that kind of phenomenon. In local government we used to call it 'red ribbon fever'. That is the overwhelming desire to have some physical infrastructure open and ready just before an election. The quality of the job perhaps comes secondary to other aspects.

After reading the member for Caloundra's words and remembering what happened with the Lady Cilento Children's Hospital, it seems to me that in Queensland Health often non-patient priority is the priority of the LNP. I think this is supported when I hear that they wanted to provide certainty in clinical waiting times in Queensland hospitals. What I think of when I hear the phrase 'certainty for Queensland hospitals' is the phrase 'restore federal funding'. If they want to ensure there is certainty, they should join with us and ask for federal funding to be restored to our hospitals.

I will quickly talk about some of the things that the federal government has done. The first federal Liberal budget slashed \$11.8 billion from public hospital funding, and we have been actively campaigning against that. These cuts are getting deeper, cutting health workforce programs, including education and training, across the nation by \$595 million. They are also making changes to bulk-billing

to the tune of \$650 million that will shift the cost back to patients and hit hip pockets hard. These are the reasons why we cannot trust the LNP to deliver on health. Our bills are always aimed at delivering, and do deliver, the best result in health outcomes. I will say that again: \$11.8 billion has been cut over seven years. That is the reason I think we can all say that we are safe in opposing this bill.