




Speech By  
**Joseph Kelly**

**MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES**

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Record of Proceedings, 12 October 2016

**MOTION: CAIRNS AND HINTERLAND HOSPITAL AND HEALTH SERVICE**

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (6.14 pm): I rise to speak against the motion by the member for Surfers Paradise. He invited us to look at the great things that they did in government. I looked at those closely when I worked in Queensland Health and I saw great big cuts.

Earlier today we heard the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services deliver a ministerial statement outlining the achievements of Queensland Health as detailed in the 2015-16 annual report—front-line services restored, waiting lists slashed, a \$51 million surplus and, most importantly for me, nurses and doctors put back in the system, because I was there when they were walked out the door. No wonder the member for Surfers Paradise has been reduced to this callow political stunt. It is the only arrow he has left to fire, but as usual he has missed the target and the point.

He should know the point by now—that, under our federal model, health and hospital services are independent statutory authorities. The nurses and the allied health professionals at QEII where I worked know this. The nurses and the staff at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital where I worked know this. They know, as the member for Surfers Paradise should know, that the HHSs are responsible for the delivery of the services they are commissioned to provide within the budget allocated under the service agreements they sign with the Department of Health. The management in the HHSs that I worked in never tired of reminding the staff that they were responsible for this. In other words, they—or more specifically the boards that govern them—are accountable for the financial management of the hospital and health services they have been established to oversee. The member for Surfers Paradise does not know whether he is walking towards his shadow or away from it.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr KELLY:** He spends half his time in here, as he did in estimates, railing against—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. I am having difficulty hearing the speaker.

**Mr KELLY:** He spends half his time in here, as he did in estimates, railing against what he calls command central—blaming the minister and the department for interfering with health and hospital services and their ability to manage their own affairs. Now he has the audacity to come into this House complaining that the minister and the department have not interfered sufficiently with the HHSs and their ability to manage their own affairs.

Unfortunately, he has flip-flop form. One day he is out there complaining about the fact that we are employing too many people; the next day he is out and about complaining about job cuts. He asked us to contrast. What a contrast he strikes to the Minister for Health, who has acted decisively to deal with the deteriorating financial situation in Cairns. Clearly, the decisions that were made by the executive team and endorsed by the board were financially unsustainable. By asking the Queensland Audit Office to re-audit the Cairns HHS, the member for Surfers Paradise is impugning the reputation of Ernst & Young by challenging their capability to complete the work for which they have been commissioned. The member for Surfers Paradise has form in dismissing independent inquiries.

**A government member:** Bad form.

**Mr KELLY:** It is bad form; I take that interjection. He dismissed the findings of the eminent QC, Margaret Wilson, into the closure of the Barrett centre as a political witch-hunt. At least he had the decency to wait until the report was released. The Ernst & Young audit of Cairns is still being finalised, yet the member for Surfers Paradise—a little too overeager, a little too anxious to try to get at least one point and one run on the board—has jumped the gun and immediately tripped over his feet. Perhaps it is because of the flip-flops.

This is not to dismiss the importance of proper financial management or to absolve the Cairns HHS management for the decisions they made that led their service into a deteriorating fiscal position. We should get out of the way of Ernst & Young and let them complete their report and let the plans for financial recovery already underway to restore the financial health—

*(Time expired)*