




Speech By
Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Federal Budget, Health

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (2.22 pm): If there is one issue that signifies the difference between Labor and LNP governments, it is the way we value, fund and deliver health care. This morning Queenslanders woke with a sense of disappointment as they reflected on a federal budget that puts at risk all the progress we have made to restore front-line services and drive down waiting lists. In 2013, the then Labor government signed the National Health Reform Agreement, which was signed by all the states, Labor and coalition, in recognition that here at last was an opportunity to end the bickering and the blame game and finally build long-term sustainability into the provision of health services. That outbreak of harmony and good sense lasted as long as the change of government and the election of Tony Abbott as prime minister.

Last night's budget is in the tradition of coalition budgets: it is a weak response to the challenges of our health system presented by our ageing population and increasing demand. Over the life of the agreement, for Queensland the shortfall is projected to be \$10 billion. When it comes to national partnership agreements, between 2009 and 2014 the annual average funding provided to Queensland was \$334 million. According to information in last night's budget, that will fall to just \$53.5 million and by 2019-20 it will be less than \$40 million. In the 2014-15 budget, the dental funding allocated to Queensland for 2017-18 was \$78.3 million. Under Scott Morrison's budget, Queensland's share is estimated to fall to just \$21.6 million, which is a cut of 72 per cent.

Regrettably, in last night's budget there was no decision to reverse the \$216.6 million cut to aged care which will directly affect the quality of the services able to be delivered to some of our most vulnerable Queenslanders and act as a disincentive to further investment in the sector at a time when demand is increasing. Last night it was also regrettable that there was no federal funding for hospital car parks in Rockhampton and Caboolture, promised by the LNP during the federal election, and no mention of the 15 Commonwealth supported medical places that the community has called for at the new Sunshine Coast University Hospital.

The much heralded unfreezing of the Medicare rebate turned out to be little more than a slow thaw, with Queenslanders being told that they will have to wait for the restoration of affordable GP and specialist services. Scott Morrison's performance last night has come up well short of what is required to guarantee decent health services for Queenslanders. This will have an impact on the delivery of health care in this state for many years to come, including our government's ability to provide timely health care to Queenslanders and to drive down waiting lists.