




Speech By
Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE

Record of Proceedings, 8 August 2017

**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL:
HEALTH, COMMUNITIES, DISABILITY SERVICES AND DOMESTIC AND
FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION COMMITTEE**

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (10.01 pm): Anyone listening to the opposition members at the Health and Ambulance Services estimates hearing could be forgiven for thinking that the two greatest issues facing our health system were flags and photocopying. Those of us who have been long-term followers of Queensland politics are well aware of the LNP's political pattern—reckless and brutal in government and lazy and inept in opposition. However, this year's Health estimates were different; they were just plain weird. There was not a question from the LNP on the list of those Queenslanders waiting longer than clinically recommended for a specialist outpatient appointment. That is hardly surprising perhaps because we have cut that list by 63 per cent since we came to government. There was not a question from the LNP on the list of those waiting longer than clinically recommended for elective surgery. Again, that is hardly surprising since on 1 July this year only 99 Queenslanders were waiting longer than clinically recommended for elective surgery—the lowest monthly long-wait figure ever recorded in Queensland, the lowest figure ever recorded since this measure first started being recorded 15 years ago in 2002.

There was not a question from the LNP on financial performance. There is no surprise there either since we have once again delivered a surplus across the system, including across our hospital and health services. Indeed, members may recall the former health minister, the member for Southern Downs, in his speech on the budget proudly saluting his achievement by declaring that under the stewardship of his financial genius the HHSs delivered a collective surplus of \$19 million. One can only imagine how thrilled he will be by the news that the collective surplus delivered by Labor across all 16 HHSs in 2016-17 was double that, more than \$38 million.

The LNP had nothing to say about our record \$16.554 billion investment in Health in this year's budget, a 21½ per cent increase on the allocation provided in the final budget of the Newman government, or the fact that 84 per cent of our budget has been distributed to our hospital and health services for the delivery of health services directly to Queenslanders compared to the 80.8 per cent the HHSs received under the LNP. There was not a question from the member for Surfers Paradise about our Enhancing Regional Hospitals program and the \$138.4 million we will be investing this year to redevelop hospitals in places like Kingaroy, Blackall and Sarina—communities completely ignored by the Liberal National Party when it was in government. As I have said in this House before, there is no greater friend of the bush when it comes to health care than the Australian Labor Party. There was not a question about front-line services and the 1,200 doctors and 4,300 nurses we have employed since the election. Again, that is not really surprising since the LNP's way of dealing with the provision of health services was to sack 4,400 health workers including 1,800 nurses and midwives.

Government members interjected.

Mr DICK: I take the interjections from government members: it was a disgrace! There was not a question from the LNP either about the \$68.5 million investment in our new adolescent treatment facility for young people with chronic mental health issues, and no wonder after its catastrophic decision to close the Barrett Adolescent Centre against expert advice without having a replacement. There was not a mention by the LNP of the successful opening of the \$1.8 billion Sunshine Coast University Hospital. Again, that is not hard to understand when we compare it to its botched opening of the Lady Cilento Children's Hospital. There was nothing about research; nothing about how our nurse navigators are out in the community changing the lives of those suffering from chronic illness; nothing about our plans to build capacity in our public hospitals in areas of high population growth in Logan, Ipswich and Caboolture; nothing on the devastating 84 per cent cut by the Commonwealth to the annual funding of our national partnership agreements; and nothing—not one thing—from the member for Surfers Paradise nor other LNP members on the challenges our health system faces from increasing demand and an ageing population.

The burning issues for the shadow minister for ceremonial protocols and office administration were how many Queensland flags were flying outside ambulance stations and who got the photocopying wrong on three out of 257 pages in the Service Delivery Statements. In survey after survey Queenslanders nominate the Australian Labor Party as the party they most trust to look after their health needs. After the dismal effort at estimates by those members opposite, is it any wonder why?