




Speech By
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**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL; REVENUE
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (3.10 pm): It is a pleasure to rise to speak in the budget reply. I commend the Leader of the Opposition for his comprehensive budget reply and the shadow Treasurer and the deputy leader of the LNP for theirs. It was interesting that the first speaker from the government's side was the Minister for Health who I shadow. The member for Pine Rivers was not in the 53rd Parliament, but the health minister's contribution today was exactly what he used to say in the 53rd Parliament when Labor members knew they were going to lose. He got more and more shrill. We saw it this morning in question time from the education minister. Those opposite become more and more shrill, more and more nervous, and are more and more abusive towards this side of the House as they get more and more nervous heading to an election.

The Minister for Health, who was minister for education in the 53rd Parliament, basically gave up on Greenslopes and moved to Woodridge. In fact, he did not attend his ministerial office for the last four months before the election in 2012. Every day in here it was as though those opposite were going to keep fighting the rear guard action, but they actually gave up on the hustings. It is interesting that we hear those personal attacks from the Minister for Health because twice in this House in this 55th Parliament—on 1 December 2015 and then on 1 December 2016—he has spoken about being generous and big-hearted. Something must happen to the Minister for Health as we get close to Christmas. It was in a condolence motion for a former member, Bill Hewitt, that the health minister spoke about civility and integrity mattering greatly. That is not what we heard before lunch today from the minister in his response to the budget reply. I think it is significant that members who have been in this House—and we have had significant change at the last two elections—who love hearing that chest-beating rhetoric from the health minister and the education minister and all of those failed ministers from that Bligh Labor government, don't worry about them.

Ms Jones: Like you?

Mr LANGBROEK: I was not in the Bligh Labor government. I am proud to say I was never in the Bligh Labor government. All that rhetoric, that chest beating and thumping, does not matter to the people of Queensland. What does matter to the two young ladies who were in the chamber a few minutes ago, Jodie and Sara, who I just met at a bowel cancer awareness function, is getting proper health treatment, getting the best education for their kids and the best future for Queenslanders, not the sort of rhetoric that we hear from the health minister trying to drag down the opposition leader, no matter who it is. But don't worry, new members of the LNP and new members of the Labor Party, you can come in here and do all of that chest beating and telling us how terrible we are, but you will get more and more nervous as the election comes closer, especially if it is at the bottom of the pendulum. Good luck to you all. Let us get into the budget reply. Let us have a bit more civility and integrity. Let us have a bit more generosity and big-heartedness between us instead of this nastiness that is coming through all the time, especially from those opposite.

When it comes to health, it is families—mums to be, those mums who I spoke about, Jodie and Sara from the Redcliffe electorate, both with bowel cancer in their early thirties, sick and vulnerable Queenslanders—who are the losers in Labor's tax-and-spend budget which does very little to improve the health services on which they rely. One in five Queenslanders are admitted into our public hospitals every year. Whether you are one of the 1.81 million Queenslanders who are treated in our emergency departments, a mum or dad to one of the 45,000 babies delivered at our hospitals or a rural or regional Queensland seeking specialist care, there is one thing many of our patients have in common: Labor has let you down again. Queenslanders have been let down by a typical Labor budget full of tricky accounting and financial mismanagement. They have been let down by a secretive Labor government that refuses to release important reports into our health system. They have been let down by a Labor government that has done very little in the last three budgets to improve patient outcomes. We hear the minister saying, 'We are matching what you did in government.' They are not improving what we did. Our focus is always on improving outcomes.

Shamefully, this year's budget has seen state funding growth shrink to just three per cent compared to 14 per cent growth from the Commonwealth. Let us go through that again. We hear all the time from the health minister that the feds are supposedly cutting out money, and I will come to that later. There has been 14 per cent growth from the Commonwealth and three per cent growth from the state. This budget also shows critical health infrastructure is not being provided, which is reflected by an underspend in the Queensland Health capital budget of \$196.5 million in the past year. It is concerning that Labor is short-changing our health system which has been plagued by a number of serious issues under Labor.

Labor's election budget is nothing but an attempt to distract Queenslanders from the real issues impacting our state. In fact, let us have a look at the record of the health minister, Cameron Dick, as health minister as he attempts to make the case that he should be given another three years. Queenslanders know that this budget is simply a con, a swindle, and does nothing to fix the significant issues highlighted in the Service Delivery Statements. Since Labor's election, Queenslanders have been waiting for meaningful action from the government to deliver better health services. By the look of this budget they will have to wait for the LNP to deliver them. In 2016-17 under Labor 20 per cent of Queenslanders seeking emergency care were made to wait in the car park. Logan Hospital, which services the constituents of the health minister and child safety minister, has consistently been ranked the worst performing in this state, the latest statistics showing that 37 per cent of patients arriving by ambulance were left waiting for more than 30 minutes. This is not fair to our ambulance staff or our hospital staff. In fact, just last week a man admitted to driving himself to the hospital after having a heart attack because the last time he was there he was left in the back of the ambulance in the car park. This is very telling of the lack of confidence Queenslanders are beginning to have in our health system under Labor. Redland, RBW, Caboolture, Gold Coast, Robina and Redcliffe hospitals are amongst the worst performing in the state. Once again, no leadership from the top is not helping our ambulance or health workers.

Disappointingly, Labor is still refusing to provide any meaningful action to fix this issue that is affecting Queenslanders seeking urgent medical attention. The LNP knows that ramping can be addressed and that is because it was the LNP that was able to significantly reduce ramping across Queensland hospitals. In our last full year in office, 2013-14, 90 per cent of all patients were off stretcher within 32 minutes of arrival at hospitals across Queensland. This is compared to 81 per cent in 2011-12 and is in stark contrast to the 80 per cent that occurred last year, 2016-17, under this do-nothing Labor government.

Ramping is worse now under the Palaszczuk Labor government than when the LNP took office in 2012. The devastating impact of hospital ramping means poor patient care and less ambulances on the road able to respond and save lives. Under Labor, patients arriving by ambulance are not the only ones left waiting for emergency care: 24 per cent of patients were left languishing longer than four hours in emergency departments. In 2015-16, 27 per cent of category 2 ED patients and 37 per cent of category 3 patients were not seen within the clinically recommended times. This is a frightening figure for Queenslanders who should expect to be seen reasonably quickly during emergency situations, as well as for our front-line staff who want to deliver the best service they can.

Front-line emergency service workers and their families are not holding their breath waiting for action from the Palaszczuk Labor government to prevent paramedic assaults. In fact, Labor's only plan has been outlined this week by the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services in a letter to the *Gympie Times*. That plan was to do nothing. The minister thinks that the current legislation, which in their term has seen no custodial sentences handed out to those who assault our hardworking emergency service workers, is sufficient. He even had the arrogance to criticise the LNP for taking action on this serious issue.

Mr Mander: He misrepresented it.

Mr LANGBROEK: He misrepresented it, absolutely, and then said he is not going to change anything. Our policy of minimum mandatory sentencing was created in consultation with front-line staff to stop them from being used as punching bags. To date Labor has done nothing and, based on the minister's comments, they have no intention of implementing any plans to ensure that offenders get more than a slap on the wrist.

I have outlined just a few of the issues our paramedics and patients face every day, yet the ambulance service has had an underspend of \$10.215 million in the last financial year. Labor should and could have done more to improve the service and the situation our front-line staff are in.

When in government the LNP introduced the wait-time surgery guarantee because patients deserve to be seen on time to receive potentially lifesaving surgery. Labor has just played politics with our waiting lists, which has resulted in almost half of category 1 and category 2 outpatients waiting longer than clinically recommended. Vaccination rates were also missed for all three categories—children under one, children under two and children under five years.

Central Queenslanders have been left waiting for a much needed cardiac clinic in the region. In fact, they have been waiting for almost 2½ years since expressions of interest closed. The people of Rockhampton and regional Queenslanders are forced to travel to Brisbane to seek lifesaving care.

Many rural and regional Queenslanders, like those in Rockhampton or Emerald, where we were a couple of weeks ago, are required to travel for specialist care and are likely to have trouble seeking reimbursement through the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme. I am pleased to see that there has been an acknowledgement of the efforts of regional members of the LNP and the issues that I highlighted recently to see that funding maintained for the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme. A recent ombudsman's report highlighted significant issues with the scheme, specifically the fact that it is not patient friendly in terms of making claims and that delays in reimbursement are causing people claiming the PTSS financial stress and sometimes hardship.

The LNP doubled funding to the scheme when in government to improve accessibility and we are still waiting for this Brisbane-centric Labor government to step up to the plate and improve the PTSS and deliver improved services to our regions. The Brisbane-centric Labor government provides regional and rural Queenslanders with a few delayed breadcrumbs when it comes to the PTSS.

Mums and bubs are also being let down by Labor, with failures in management leading to baby deaths, birth injuries and stressed midwives at hospitals across the state. Maternity consumers from the Redlands to Toowoomba, Emerald, Cooktown and Cairns are telling me that there are significant disparities in care and rules surrounding independent midwives between HHSs. A very good example is between the Gold Coast University Hospital and the Redlands and Logan hospitals. The Gold Coast University Hospital has now introduced a rule where women have to come from a certain area to be allowed to attend. That is creating a lot of problems for people who may have attended there for previous births with independent midwives and now no longer can. The Labor government's lack of leadership and management in this space is triggering these serious issues.

The health minister has also refused to release vital reports into our mental health system. So how much for openness, honesty and transparency. We are still waiting for the report into the Moorooka bus incident and for Labor to publicly release another report outlining recommendations after a woman fell pregnant at The Park mental health facility. It is bizarre that the Labor government that loves to commission reports also refuses to release many of the findings to Queenslanders who are impacted by these issues.

Frustratingly, we had to wait almost a year to read the Mental Health Commissioner report released at the end of May, 11 months after the end of the last financial year. This is critical information in the face of a mental health system that has lurched from crisis to crisis under Labor. In under 12 months we have had claims of nepotism, unlawful appointments and the resignation of the chair of the mental health tribunal. The minister pushed an amendment through the House at the eleventh hour to validate 11,000 cases that were presided over by an unqualified legal member without review.

The mental health report reveals some damning information on the state of our mental health system. Queenslanders would be shocked to know that some 1,387 patients on strict orders were out in the community committing crimes whilst supposedly being supervised. Only 13 per cent of matters were dealt with in the statutory time frame of 21 days for criminal matters needing referral by the director of mental health. This is simply not good enough. The cynical late Friday release of the report, a couple of weeks ago, shows the minister is more interested in cover-up than accountability when it comes to our mental health system. This report is confirmation our mental health system is in crisis and with a record number of patients on orders things look set to get worse.

While vital reviews have been withheld, the minister has been happy to provide some unusual performance measures. Under Labor's bizarre agenda the budget papers have resorted to reporting on—wait for it—the percentage of Queenslanders eating fruit and vegetables as a performance measure. This just highlights the government's desperation to show positive performance figures in a report that is pretty damning for the government.

If we have learnt one thing about the health minister, Cameron Dick, and the Labor government, it is that they never like to admit that they are to blame. A prime example of this is when the Cairns Hospital and Health Service blew their budget—just a couple of months after this time last year—by \$80 million because of Labor's mismanagement. One would think that the minister would take some responsibility after this crisis, but instead the entire board took the fall. Apparently the buck does not stop with the minister under Labor.

Page 32 of the 2015-16 Queensland state budget Service Delivery Statements for the Department of Health provides at dot point 11 a glowing assessment of the LNP's management of the health system whilst we were in government. It reads—

This commitment has been demonstrated through significant improvements in productivity and efficiency which have led to the generation of surpluses over the last three years while still delivering increased activity across the system. This control will be maintained over the current financial year.

That is an endorsement of what the LNP did whilst in government. Under the LNP, HHSs achieved a \$19 million surplus in 2014-15, which was to be reinvested in more services locally with HHSs having the autonomy to do what was best for their communities.

Now we are seeing Queensland Health providing \$70 million over 2016-17 and 2017-18 to ensure liquidity in Cairns. The Cairns HHS budget crisis is terminal and slipping further and further into deficit. Multimillion dollar deficits mean services to sick people will have to be cut just to balance the books. It is clear from this year's budget that the HHS is teetering on the edge of bankruptcy. In this instance, something has to give. The sick and injured of Cairns will continue to suffer because of Labor's poor management of health services in Cairns. The Cairns HHS covers a very vast region of Far North Queensland—up to 250,000 Queenslanders.

Whilst Cairns HHS hangs on by a thread, Labor has managed to put a cog in the works in projects across the state. Labor has abandoned its so-called flagship Advancing Queensland Infrastructure Program as it underspent by \$11.6 million. The people of Aramac are still waiting for their health redevelopment, with works delayed by a \$600,000 underspend in 2016-17. Labor has abandoned the people of Aurukun again with a \$3.5 million underspend and delay in delivering their health redevelopment. In Cairns, once again, the last stage of the Cairns Hospital redevelopment has been delayed with a \$5 million underspend in 2016-17.

Regional hospitals missed out on more than \$22.2 million in promised capital works funding in 2016-17. The Rockhampton Hospital expansion was delayed with a \$5 million underspend. ICT spending in capital has blown out by \$15 million in 2017-18 to more than \$135 million. That is the iEMR system and the Hibiscus system that are due to be replaced. There are issues constantly in IT in Health. Everyone knows about Labor and their association with IT and the Health payroll system. Under this Labor minister and poor budget management supplies and services also blew out by \$680 million in 2016-17.

When the health minister is not blaming winter—winter is coming—the HHSs or even the former LNP government for his shortfall, he is quick to blame the feds. Let us take a look at what the federal LNP government has delivered for Queensland Health. Commonwealth funding to Queensland hospitals is at record levels. Commonwealth funding for Queensland hospitals will increase from \$3.1 billion in 2014-15 to \$3.9 billion in 2016-17 to over \$4.8 billion in 2020-21. This means Commonwealth funding to Queensland hospitals will have increased by 57.5 per cent since 2014-15. That means more hospitals, more doctors and services for Queenslanders if the Labor government can get it right.

This new funding is part of a new hospitals agreement signed and agreed to by the Queensland government in 2016. The Queensland Premier and Treasurer issued a media release on 1 April 2016 announcing the agreement and stating that Queensland had negotiated to secure extra funding from the Commonwealth. Minister Dick signed the agreement on 30 November 2016 establishing the allocation of funding by hospitals in Queensland. Labor has been quick to cry crocodile tears about the latest federal budget, claiming that there has been a \$10 billion cut to Health. Bill Shorten cannot even back the claim and has refused to back its \$57 billion unfunded hospital promise. It is not in their budget.

The health minister should hang his head in shame. This budget is a con job and a swindle and it does nothing to fix the significant issues highlighted in the Service Delivery Statements. In fact, the Service Delivery Statements show that delays and underspending are the Labor way. It also shows that

for the past three budgets Labor has had its 'Brisbane blinkers' on. This year they want to deliver the Cross River Rail for Brisbane at the cost of regional and rural Queenslanders across the state who get nothing.

Only the LNP can deliver a world-class health system, not just for Brisbane but for all Queenslanders. We will focus on all of our customers and our patients, our doctors and nurses, our allied health workers and our emergency service workers to make sure that Queenslanders get the best outcomes. We are not just talking about more money. It is about making sure that we can get more done with it, supporting our front-line workers and making sure that Queenslanders end up with the best health outcomes for them and for future generations.