




Speech By  
**John-Paul Langbroek**  
**MEMBER FOR SURFERS PARADISE**

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Record of Proceedings, 8 August 2017

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

 **Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (9.36 pm): One of the great things about being in the parliament is we see things happen over the years and we tend to think, 'I wonder if this has happened before.' I vaguely remember back in 2007 being the shadow health minister and making some inquiries about Queensland Health in relation to the budget papers and the SDS. I remember there was something about three regions in Queensland Health and I asked about the breakdown of funding for each of the regions. After some questioning, finally I got the answer back from the then Department of Health bureaucrat that the figure in the SDS was actually billions and not millions. It was a fairly significant error in the budget papers and certainly made the then minister, Stephen Robertson, pay a bit more attention than he had been to my supposedly gentle questioning. It was pretty significant that there were lines in the budget papers back then that had been represented as millions when the amount was billions.

This year it was very interesting to ask the minister whether he stood by the budget papers and the amounts that were in the budget papers for each of the 16 HHSs in the Queensland health department. He assured us that the amounts that were in the SDS were correct. Then I asked the director-general if all the amounts in the SDS were correct and then I asked the CEO of the Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service if the amounts were correct. It turned out that there was a duplication in the budget papers that were presented in here on 13 June for the Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service which were the same financial reporting measures as for the Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service. It had never been detected; it had never been corrected until the end of the hearing when the minister finally corrected the tabled version. It was fairly significant to see that at all levels of governance, right down to the HHS, no-one had detected that the statistics for the Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service were exactly the same as those presented for another region. One region has about 5,000 employees and one has about 2,000.

It was fairly indicative of the lack of respect of the minister for the proceedings of the parliament. I had been down to the Table Office to check a number of other budget papers—unsealed so that I could open them to see if the mistake was there, and that is exactly what had happened. That is one of the administrative issues that was uncovered. Finally, at the end of the day the minister presented the correct tabled version. As I understand it, the department had become aware of it within a few days of the budget being brought down, but there had been no communication with the ministerial office so a correction could be tabled out of session, which I understand the police minister did for some explanatory notes for a bill.

In fact, out-of-session tablings happen all the time. That was a significant issue which took up a fair bit of time in the first section of questioning. When we got down to the practical aspects we found out that we have a mental health system shrouded in secrecy, the return of ramping—which the minister's own constituents have been impacted by—the incorrect labelling of blood tubes potentially

leading to misdiagnoses and payroll issues rolling on and on for frustrated current and former Queensland Health employees. To members on this side of the House who have presented cases to me, can I say that those people who are prepared to make the effort will apparently get a hearing from Queensland Health if they are prepared to have you make representations on their behalf. We have been able to get good results for some of those people whose cases we brought up at the hearing.

I am greatly concerned the minister acknowledged that he does not speak to board members of the hospital and health services: he speaks to the CEOs and the chairs. He does meet with the unions, of course. I think it fairly beggars belief that the minister will not meet with board members. He had not foreseen the unprecedented \$80 million cost blowout at Cairns that we identified in the previous budget which finally came to light at around this time last year in Cairns. They are the sorts of things you find when you are out on the ground speaking to people, while the minister denies any and all responsibility for anything that happens within the hospitals he is supposed to be overseeing. We have seen concerns about communication with the department, which is why he did not know about the errors in the budget papers. There is the seemingly small issue of the government not providing Queensland flags to ambulance services. They are little issues but they are important ones that add up as well.