




Speech By
Ray Stevens

MEMBER FOR MERMAID BEACH

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ADJOURNMENT

Queensland Teachers' Union, Wages

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (6.16 pm): I rise to bring to the attention of the House the failing of the Queensland Teachers' Union to look after the interests of all of its members, in this case particularly the therapists employed by Education Queensland who are discriminated against because they are employed by the department of education and not the Queensland health department. We are talking about speech, physio and occupational therapists who are the cornerstones of a better education for many of our disadvantaged students throughout Queensland. Health department therapists enjoy an extra \$5,000 to \$10,000 per annum for the same work and hours and also enjoy a professional development allowance of around \$1,600 per annum not received by education department professionals. This anomaly obviously started under the Beattie Labor government when they were in dire straits over the failure of the Queensland health system. In desperation to secure therapists for Queensland Health, they had to adjust remuneration to be competitive with interstate rivals.

Subsequent enterprise bargaining negotiations by the Queensland Teachers' Union have failed to address this imbalance. The education department therapists with whom I have met feel let down by their union and that this Palaszczuk Labor government can endorse less pay for Queensland government employees doing exactly the same work. Someone does not have to be Einstein to work out that, before too long, if the pay rates are not equalised excellent Queensland government therapist employees will be tempted to move from Education to Health for the extra pay and Queensland education will end up with a second-rate roster of therapist employees. If they were not otherwise occupied with their Trojan Horse political rallies for the Labor Party, their union conferences at their members' expense and dining out expenses paid for by their members, they might have noticed that some of the members they are supposed to represent were receiving less pay for exactly the same work than equally trained and equally experienced therapists in the Queensland health department. Hello! They are all Queensland government employees. Where is the fairness in that?

Where were the union representatives when the latest round of enterprise bargaining took place and was settled in 2015 when it was patently clear that 360 full-time equivalent Queensland education department employees were being underpaid, particularly under this current government's supposed 'fairness in pay' mantra compared to their workplace equivalents in the health department? Indeed, it is my great pleasure to highlight this anomaly because I firmly believe in equal pay for equal work regardless of gender or which section of the Queensland government someone works for. I know some bright spark will say, 'But they get education department holidays,' when the reality is that they do not under their award. They assure me they get the same four-week holiday entitlements as their health department equivalents and any extra time in school holidays has to be made up by working extra hours during term time. If it is good enough for the therapists in the health department, it is good enough for the therapists in the education department. To borrow some well-worn chants from the union movement, 'What do we want? Equal pay for equal work! When do we want it? We want it now!'