




Speech By
Brittany Lauga

MEMBER FOR KEPPEL

Record of Proceedings, 21 March 2018

ADJOURNMENT

Health Services

 **Mrs LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (7.09 pm): The doctors, nurses, surgeons, midwives, cleaners, ward staff, pathologists, radiologists, allied health professionals, kitchen staff and everyone at the Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service work so incredibly hard to improve the health of our local people.

Mr Harper: Paramedics.

Mrs LAUGA: I take the interjection from the member for Thuringowa—the paramedics as well. I speak of Rachel, a nurse who gives everything to make sure that patients are treated with dignity and respect; or Zeena, a child health nurse who visits the homes of new mothers and their babies, including mine after the birth of my daughter, to check they are settling in okay after birth; or Carmel, a wardie who works day in, day out to ensure the hospital runs as smoothly as possible each and every day but has sadly been the victim of brutal physical assaults by patients. They put their heart and soul into their work, and sometimes their lives on the line, because they believe in delivering quality, integrated health services focused on the patient.

However, a serious problem is looming. Each year on average about one in five Queenslanders is being admitted to hospital and this number is growing. Our health systems are under pressure. Hospital admissions are growing by an additional 70,000 every year and emergency department presentations by an additional 50,000 every year. This trend is unsustainable.

Labor values and supports a well-resourced, publicly funded universal health system that helps Queenslanders achieve and maintain good physical and mental health and wellbeing. Queensland Labor is doing its part to lead the way in delivering better health care and a healthier community by delivering record Health budgets, introducing nurse-to-patient ratios and restoring front-line health services including an extra 4,150 nurses and 1,600 doctors. When Labor came into office in 2015 there were 104,000 Queenslanders waiting longer than clinically recommended for a specialist appointment. That number has already been reduced by almost two-thirds.

It is getting more and more difficult to deliver a quality health system when the federal LNP keeps cutting health funding. In the latest cut Central Queensland could lose \$39 million in health services following the federal LNP government's decision to refuse funding it owes to our hospital. This is a savage attack on health care in Central Queensland. We are not talking about arguments over future funding; this is about Canberra paying for hundreds of Central Queensland patients already treated. Worse, the amount owing is accumulating, meaning Queenslanders are \$979 million worse off over four years because of Canberra's refusal to pay its fair share.

The funding owed to Central Queensland equates to 424 cataracts and lens procedures, 299 hernia repairs, 214 hip or knee operations—a total of 14,263 medical procedures. Despite calls from the Palaszczuk government, this overdue money has not been paid. If Canberra refuses to pay its fair

share for our hospitals, including the Rockhampton Hospital and the Capricorn Coast Hospital, they will be forced to reduce health services. The federal LNP government needs to pay up or it will continue to put at risk the treatment of thousands of Central Queenslanders.