




Speech By
Glenn Butcher

MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE

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PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Liberal National Party

 **Mr BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (2.53 pm): I rise today to condemn the LNP's lack of care or consideration for the people of Queensland and especially the people of Central Queensland. It beggars belief that the member for Nanango and the federal member for Flynn have been silent on two major issues that directly impact the lives of Central Queenslanders and Gladstone people alike—the federal government's plan to strip Queensland of \$1.6 billion in GST revenue and the federal government's plan to skip out on the bill owed to Queensland hospitals, including the Gladstone Hospital in my electorate.

If the member for Nanango and the federal member for Flynn gave a damn about Central Queensland, they would be standing up to their mates in Canberra and telling them that this is not the Queensland way, this is not a fair go for all and you cannot make a deal to pay for something and then skip out on the cheque. The Turnbull government asked the Productivity Commission to report about changes to the GST carve-up to the states and the draft report has Queensland set to lose out big time. The most likely scenario on the table is \$1.6 billion lost annually. That translates to 5,000 fewer teachers, 5,000 fewer nurses, 3,000 fewer police officers and over 1,100 fewer firefighters.

We all know that the LNP is used to cutting essential services to Queenslanders. The member for Nanango sat by and said nothing while the Turnbull government took an axe to Queensland's bottom line. Where was the member for Nanango and the federal member for Flynn when the Productivity Commission was coming up with a recommendation to remove billions of dollars from Queenslanders? Nowhere.

On top of that, Queensland is currently owed over a billion dollars for health services—services already delivered. That is not called fiscal responsibility; that is called burying one's head in the sand and hoping the problem will go away. It is not going to go anywhere. I will stand up and fight for our fair share so that the people in my electorate do not have to go without. Central Queensland could lose \$39 million from our health service. That equals 424 cataract and lens procedures, 299 hernia repairs, 214 hip or knee operations—14,263 medical procedures in total.

Despite this, the Palaszczuk government has continued to invest in the health care for people in my region and in Gladstone. Our new step-up step-down facility to assist mental health patients in my region will open this year. Construction of the new accident and emergency department is well underway at Gladstone Hospital and we have employed more nurses and more doctors. The reality is that this cannot be sustained while the federal government continues to cut, cut, cut. The question for the member for Nanango and the federal member for Flynn is simple: are they on Queensland's side or not?