




Speech By
Glenn Butcher

MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE

Record of Proceedings, 17 May 2018

PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Gladstone Electorate, Federal Budget

 **Mr BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (2.45 pm): I rise today to speak about how disappointing it is that yet again Central Queensland has been forgotten by the federal government and the members for Flynn and Capricornia. Last week the federal government handed down an unfair budget that delivered big multinational businesses an \$80 billion tax handout while delivering nothing tangible for Central Queenslanders, particularly in my electorate of Gladstone.

There was no increased investment in health, no increased investment in our kids' education and nowhere near enough for our ageing population. Forget about our young ones, because a \$60 million cut to the training budget means that in Central Queensland up to 636 training places are now at risk. It is disappointing to see hopeful young people kicked in the guts by their federal representatives. While the federal coalition government continues to abandon its responsibilities to the people of Queensland, it will again be left to the Palaszczuk government to provide the vision required to help school leavers and other young people get the skills they need to find work.

The people of Gladstone and Central Queensland deserve better. If you live in Gladstone or the surrounding regions, then I guess your health needs do not matter to the member for Flynn either. There has been no Medicare funded MRI service in our region since the mobile service was decommissioned in 2013. I previously raised this issue with the federal health minister and the member for Flynn, yet this year's budget did nothing to address it. The member for Flynn's logo says, 'Ken O'Dowd is delivering for Gladstone, supporting businesses and bringing more doctors to CQ'. What a crock! The response seems to be that, in an area with a regional population in excess of 70,000, it is acceptable for residents to be forced to pay the full cost of their health imagery needs or wear the cost and inconvenience of travelling up the road to Rockhampton—some hour and a half's drive away—to access a bulk-billed service. For some patients this is a regular occurrence. Quite simply, it is just one more stress they do not need at a very anxious time.

I had hoped that this federal budget might support the Palaszczuk government's investment in much needed infrastructure upgrades at the Gladstone Hospital. Alas, access to quality medical services and facilities is not high on the agenda for the coalition and the member for Flynn. There is no getting around it: this coalition government wants the people of Gladstone to work longer; to pay out of their own pocket for supported residential places; to pay for their own MRIs; to pay for their own health care; and to pay for their own education and training needs. But do not worry, Mr Speaker: if you are a multinational business paying no tax, the coalition government in Australia has your back.