




Speech By
Joseph Kelly

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

Record of Proceedings, 31 October 2018

MOTION

Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (5.47 pm): I rise to oppose the motion moved by the member for Mudgeeraba. This motion demonstrates the sheer hypocrisy of the opposition given its terrible Health record when it was in government. I lived through that record. I was there working in Queensland Health during the entirety of that record and I saw what happened to workers under that record. More disturbingly, I saw what happened to patients and it is not something I will quickly forget. I will tell members something else I will not quickly forget, and in fact I will never forget it and I suspect no nurse or midwife in this state will forget it: that the member for Mudgeeraba—a nurse—voted against safe nurse- and midwife-to-patient ratios. I remember that record clearly. In government that was a record that consisted of sacking healthcare workers and cutting and closing services.

Let us look at a few examples from my experience. The statewide stroke service—gone. That was a service that supported patients with complex needs discharged to rural and remote and regional centres in areas represented by many of the members on that side of the House. That service has gone so there is no support, no advice, no equipment for doctors, nurses and physios in these areas. There was no thought for what that meant for patients—just a number on a page, a number to be gotten rid of. The clinical facilitator in our ward was just another number—gone from our ward, as they were from every ward in the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital. There was no thought put into what it meant to get rid of positions like that. That clinical facilitator was one of the most experienced, dedicated, educated nurses I have worked with in that she had over 40 years of experience, but guess what? She was gone.

A month after she was gone we were all summoned into a meeting by the senior management of the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital. In fact, the assistant director of nursing was sent to that meeting. They sat us all down in a room and castigated us. They asked, 'Why aren't you doing these jobs? Why aren't you doing jobs A, B, C, D, E, F, G and H?' We looked at them and thought to ourselves, 'Are they joking? Are they serious? Is this a serious meeting that we are having here?' We looked at those jobs and asked, 'Did you think about how those jobs were performed a month ago? Every single job that you are demanding to be done was done by the clinical facilitator.' There was no thought whatsoever for what getting rid of the clinical facilitator meant for the patients.

Having been a nurse for over 30 years, I know how hard our nurses, doctors, midwives and healthcare professionals and support staff work. The record of those opposite while in government is of utterly abandoning our wonderful healthcare workers. In just three years, 4,400 Health staff were sacked, including 1,800 of my nursing and midwifery colleagues.

Although that is tragic, slashing funding to non-government organisations that carried out preventative health projects and health promotion was utter vandalism. Getting rid of funding to organisations such as Diabetes Queensland, Drug Arm, the Eating Disorders Association, the Kidney

Support Network, Mission Australia, Lupus Australia, the National Heart Foundation, the Royal Flying Doctor Service and the Lung Foundation was utter vandalism. When you destroy preventive health services, when you destroy health promotion services, you do intergenerational damage. I am proud to be part of a government that has had two successive health ministers who are doing everything they can to restore those services.

I will not even get on to the Barrett Adolescent Centre, because that upsets me too much. I want to talk about Indigenous sexual health. In 2011, we had a chance of eradicating syphilis in remote communities. Did we take that chance? No. We got rid of the services that would have allowed that to occur. Now, we have an epidemic of syphilis in those communities. This is an unacceptable tragedy.

We have heard the shadow spokesperson for health put forward an alphabet of statements in today's motion, which claims that Queensland's health system is in crisis. We have heard the shadow spokesperson imply that Queensland does not have a world-class health system when nothing could be further from the truth. I have worked in it. I have worked in other systems. I know that it is a world-class health system. That is backed up by research from around the world.

This motion is shameful. The shadow health minister and the Leader of the Opposition should be standing up for Queensland Health, they should be standing up for Queensland Health workers and they should be standing up for patients. They should be calling on the Morrison government to stop its cuts and its chronic underfunding of health and standing up for our workers and the patients of this state.

(Time expired)