



Speech By  
**Stephen Andrew**


**MEMBER FOR MIRANI**

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**ADJOURNMENT**

**Health System**

 **Mr ANDREW** (Mirani—PHON) (6.00 pm): Recent reports suggest that parents of sick children are sleeping in their cars in car parks because the Queensland government is failing to support regional families that need to travel to the city for health care. The PTSS—Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme—provides travel and accommodation subsidies for patients who are required to travel more than 50 kilometres from their nearest hospital for treatment and specialist appointments. Patients are not being properly informed of their entitlements. The application process is lengthy and reimbursements come with lengthy delays.

Reports suggest that despite Queensland Health conducting four reviews of the PTSS since 2010, no reforms have been implemented. That was eight years ago. Today there were also media reports suggesting that \$10.6 million in funds was cut from children's health last year. This saw six health and hospital services suffer cuts in state government funding, including Mackay and the Wide Bay which received less funding in 2017-18 compared with the previous year. This is an appalling state of affairs for regional health and families.

It is also concerning that I have just learnt today from a constituent that the Mackay Base Hospital was without a full-time paediatrician for four months. A young mother, grappling with a firsthand experience of how our health system has let her, her sick child, Molly, and their family down, provided her views. She stated that the nurses at the hospital are superheroes without powers. They are on the brink as resources are stretched and yet they find themselves on the front line dealing with mothers like this lady who have a sick and suffering child in pain but cannot even get an appointment with a paediatrician.

Parents like her with sick children in pain have to fly to Brisbane so they can be seen at the Lady Cilento hospital because they are not receiving timely and adequate care in Mackay. There is a major flaw in the health system in the regional setting for complex children with a rare disease, especially with the lack of specialist doctors. If I could retell the absolute horrors explained to me by this mother regarding the misdiagnosis, the backwards and forwards and the sometimes inappropriate care, not to mention the emotional and physical stress placed upon all the family, then maybe we could reach common ground and the government would see that this is not acceptable. It is almost forcing suffering upon the children, and that is no exaggeration. That is simply not good enough and it is beyond inappropriate for the families who are struggling enough already. It is not just the heartbreak of having a sick child but also the helplessness in their pursuit of the best care for their children. For many there are also socioeconomic factors. More should be done to encourage doctors and specialists to regional centres—

*(Time expired)*