




Speech By
Aaron Harper

MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA

Record of Proceedings, 30 April 2019

HEALTH LEGISLATION (SCOPE OF PRACTICE) AMENDMENT REGULATION

Disallowance of Statutory Instrument

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (6.08 pm): I rise to speak against the member for Mudgeeraba's motion. As I said when we tabled the report, it was passed unanimously, but here we are listening to the rants of the LNP. This move by the opposition shows just where its priorities are. It cares more about the name of a hospital than it does about delivering or helping deliver the best possible health outcomes for Queenslanders.

Mr Hunt interjected.

Mr HARPER: The member for Mudgeeraba has shown that she is living in the past rather than thinking about how we can deliver health care—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stewart): Order! One moment, member for Thuringowa. Member for Nicklin, I just finished addressing the chamber and you continued to make interjections, which were not being taken, across the chamber. You are now warned under the standing orders.

Mr HARPER: As I said, the member for Mudgeeraba has shown that she is living in the past. I want to take the point made by the member for Caloundra about standing up for heroes in this state and tackle some comments made by the member for Mudgeeraba about ambulance ramping. With 25 years of experience as a paramedic, I can tell members that the LNP did not stand up for paramedics. The LNP certainly did not stand up for paramedics in regard to ramping—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Thuringowa, I am going to bring you back to the motion that is being debated. I need you to be relevant.

Mr HARPER: As chair of the health committee, I have spent a lot of time speaking to my constituents in the Thuringowa electorate about their views of the health care provided by Queensland Health. Whilst I am on my feet, I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the great work of our nurses, allied health professionals, support staff and paramedics who deliver a high standard of care to the Townsville Hospital and Health Service.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Thuringowa, you need to come back to the motion before us. It is not about health care in general. Can you come back to the motion, please.

Mr HARPER: Certainly, Mr Deputy Speaker. I am proud to be a member of a Labor government that has delivered on funding and restoring nurses and doctors in our HHSs. In the Townsville HHS, we hired an additional—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Thuringowa, I remind you that this motion is about the name change of Lady Cilento, not about Townsville hospital or nurses. I need you to come back to the title of the motion.

Mr HARPER: Certainly, Mr Deputy Speaker. The only people who are talking about the name change for the hospital, previously known as Lady Cilento, are those members opposite. They should spend less time banging on about the name of a hospital and more time reflecting on their dismal record in health. The opposition sucked thousands of front-line healthcare workers from across Queensland. It was the Newman government—

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order in relation to relevance to the matter at hand.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Member for Thuringowa, could you come back to the motion, please.

Mr HARPER: Mr Deputy Speaker, thank you very much. This was a name change that did not cost Queensland Health a cent.

An opposition member interjected.

Mr HARPER: All the funding to change the name came from the department of public works. Not one cent less has been spent on sick Queensland children. This government backs our doctors and nurses—a radical thought for those opposite, I know. When those doctors and nurses from the Queensland Children's Hospital came to us, we listened. Clinicians told us that patients and their families were confused by the name Lady Cilento and thought that it was a private hospital. Doctors at the hospital—

An opposition member interjected.

Mr HARPER: I heard from that people who live in Townsville—

Mr Watts interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Toowoomba North, I have made my concerns about behaviour in the chamber tonight very clear. You have continued to interject. Those interjections have not been taken. You are now warned under the standing orders.

Mr HARPER: I can certainly attest that, in speaking with constituents in my electorate of Thuringowa, they thought that Lady Cilento was a private hospital. Doctors at the hospital told us that patients in regional Queensland in particular did not know that the hospital was a public hospital. We heard heartbreaking stories from doctors about parents who thought that they could not afford the treatment. This meant that there was a very real risk that sick children were not receiving the latest in care because their parents thought that they might have to pay at Lady Cilento. This is a real issue that was raised by people in my electorate. They thought that it was a private hospital.

An opposition member interjected.

Mr HARPER: I am not going to listen to the member. There should not be even the slightest risk of parents thinking that they cannot afford treatment for their children, especially when this hospital was built using taxpayers' money for the people of Queensland. This confusion was hindering our ability to deliver the best possible health outcomes for our patients. When clinical stakeholders met with us, they told us that they had concerns about the name as well and we listened.

An opposition member interjected.

Mr HARPER: I am not listening to you.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stewart): Order! Member for Thuringowa, you need to direct your comments through the chair. Again, those in the opposition need to direct their comments through the chair.

Mr HARPER: The lack of name recognition among the broader medical community meant that the world-class research being generated by the Children's Hospital was not being attributed correctly. Researchers believed that Queensland patients missed out on opportunities to participate in innovative medical trials—

Ms Bates interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Mudgeeraba, you have had enough warnings tonight. You are now warned under the standing orders.

Mr HARPER: Researchers believed that Queensland patients missed out on opportunities to participate in innovative clinical trials because of the hospital's name. When our researchers went overseas, they told us how the international medical community struggled to understand that the hospital is a public hospital and that their research was being done in Queensland. There was a real risk that they would miss out on clinical trials and additional research funding, which is so important when we are talking about patient care outcomes. Evidence based research is very important. That is something the members opposite do not understand.

Mr Hart interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Burleigh, you are now warned under the standing orders.

Mr HARPER: Staff at the hospital—doctors, nurses and researchers—signed a petition calling on the government to change the name. Nine hundred people knew the impact that the hospital's name was having on service delivery and called on us—a Labor government—to remedy this problem and we listened to them. The decision to change the name was driven by this government's commitment to delivering the best quality health care we can to all Queenslanders. I congratulate the minister on tackling this difficult issue. He listened to the medical staff. They wanted the name changed. We know that there was going to be—

An opposition member interjected.

Mr HARPER: I take that interjection. I can assure the member that, under the LNP, under Newman, ramping was at its worst.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Thuringowa, will you come back to the motion, please.

Mr HARPER: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I was taking his interjection.

Mr Purdie interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Ninderry, you are not in your designated seat. You are now warned under the standing orders.

Mr HARPER: They need to learn some rules—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Thuringowa!

Mr HARPER: Those opposite carry on about the lack of consultation even though we listened to the views of the staff, went to the community, arranged briefings with MPs and commissioned research into the matter. When the LNP changed the name from the Queensland Children's Hospital to Lady Cilento, there was zero consultation. The members opposite just went ahead and did it. You did not talk to anyone. You did not talk to the doctors, nurses, community members—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Thuringowa, will you speak through the chair. If you cannot, I will ask you to sit down.

Mr HARPER: Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker.

An opposition member interjected.

Mr HARPER: The member is counting. I thank him very much. The members opposite did not listen to anyone—not when it came to this and not when they sacked our front-line workers. Now they are again ignoring Queensland's front-line workers.