




Speech By
Bruce Saunders

MEMBER FOR MARYBOROUGH

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MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Maryborough Hospital; Rheinmetall-NIOA

 **Mr SAUNDERS** (Maryborough—ALP) (2.41 pm): I rise to talk about the work of the Maryborough ED. Last Friday was a very important day in the Maryborough electorate because we opened the first section of the \$14.3 million upgrade to the Maryborough Hospital. This is in addition to the other work that the Palaszczuk government has done in reinvigorating the Maryborough Hospital, including the upgrading of the air conditioning, the rewiring of the hospital, new lifts et cetera.

The first stage of the \$14.3 million upgrade is the upgrade to the A&E and specialist outpatients departments. We have increased the treatment spaces in the hospital from 10 to 18. That includes 13 consultation rooms, three treatment rooms, a plaster room and a procedure room. This is absolutely amazing. I walked through this last week with Peter Heath from the WBHHS. It is amazing to see the transformation of the Maryborough Hospital. It is a state-of-the-art facility compared to what it was.

I congratulate the former health minister, the current health minister, the CEO of the WBHHS, the board and board chair Peta Jamieson who have been working with me to make sure the upgrade of the Maryborough Hospital is on target, on time and on budget. This is going to be a big bonus for not only those of Maryborough city but all those in the satellite towns around Maryborough—Howard, Torbanlea, Boonooroo, Maaroom, Poona, Tiaro et cetera—who come in and use the Maryborough Hospital.

The next part of the extension is to the emergency department. We are going to increase the treatment spaces from 17 to 21, including six acute bays, four fast-track bays, two resuscitation bays and seven clinical decision unit beds. This is being done by the Palaszczuk government when we have had \$11 million taken out of the Health budget by—is it the Abbott-Morrison government? I do not know who the Prime Minister or the Deputy Prime Minister is from day to day. We have lost \$11 million a year from the Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service.

I know that my private health insurance will go up on 1 April. The WBHHS has had a 40 per cent increase year on year in patients through the ED. It is already 15 per cent up on this time last year. People cannot afford their private health insurance because of the—let us go through it again—Abbott-Turnbull-Morrison, who is next, government which is doing diabolical things in the WBHHS, my area. They cut funding by \$11 million. Not only that, they have cut money from our dental budget.

We hear them say that they are really concerned about Queenslanders. What did we hear from the two federal LNP members? Nothing—crickets, crickets, crickets. They have cut \$11.5 million out of our budget. That is very harmful to the people of the Wide Bay.

The other good news—and I would like to congratulate the member for Woodridge on this—is the Palaszczuk Labor government grant of \$7.5 million to the Rheinmetall-NIOA shell casing factory in Maryborough. This will create 110 high skill jobs for our community.

Once again, what did we see? We had the member for Woodridge, the Minister for State Development, come to Maryborough, but we had to physically drag the federal government to the table and say, 'Show us your money.' Once again they were all promises but no action. It was only due to the efforts of the member for Woodridge, the Minister for State Development, the ALP candidate for Wide Bay, Jason Scanes and me that the federal government came to the party.

I also thank the Mayor of the Fraser Coast Regional Council, George Seymour, for his fantastic work with Rheinmetall-NIOA. This will transform Maryborough. This is a great manufacturing business that will come to Maryborough. It will create about 110 full-time jobs and bring a worldwide company, Rheinmetall, to the Maryborough district. We can thank the Palaszczuk Labor government for once again delivering for regional Queensland.