




Speech By
Lachlan Millar

MEMBER FOR GREGORY

Record of Proceedings, 2 May 2019

HEALTH AND WELLBEING QUEENSLAND BILL

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (4.56 pm): I will make a short contribution to the debate on the Health and Wellbeing Queensland Bill. Preventive health is very important and there is one health board that does it fantastically well: the Central West Hospital and Health Service board. As part of its ongoing efforts, the board, its administrators, doctors and nurses do preventive health very well because distance is a big issue when it comes to receiving health care. I commend the Central West Hospital and Health Service board and acknowledge its ability to address preventive health.

I believe that preventive health is something that we must all do, but I am concerned that through this bill we will be spending \$35.42 million in the 2018-19 planned budget. A sum of \$35 million would go a long way in the seat of Gregory when it comes to health facilities. Last night I spoke about accessing renal dialysis in Emerald and Longreach so that people do not have to leave their loved ones and their homes to receive treatment in Rockhampton. Through this bill we will spend \$35 million on preventive health, which is important, but I hope we will not be spending a lot of that money on stress balls, pens, hats and other paraphernalia. We have to spend the money on health. We have to spend the money where it is needed.

Government members interjected.

Mr MILLAR: I take the interjections from those opposite. The member for Southern Downs talked about the Heart of Australia truck and Rolf Gomes. That program has been going for well over four or five years. In Western Queensland it does fantastic work analysing cardiac conditions. Because of the truck, people can have a stress test in Blackall, Tambo, Augathella or Blackwater. It can deliver specialist services to small communities, so people do not have to jump on a plane or get in their car to travel to Brisbane to see a specialist. In Western Queensland, the specialist goes to the people.

The last time I saw the Heart of Australia truck I was with the shadow health minister. When we turned up, we saw the Queensland government emblem on the back of the truck. Why is that emblem on the back of the truck? That is because it was the LNP government under Lawrence Springborg who funded such an important facility for regional and rural Queensland. The other government that is funding the Heart of Australia truck is the Morrison LNP federal government thanks to Barry O'Sullivan, the Senator in Queensland, who is able to get funding to keep that important asset.

A government member interjected.

Mr MILLAR: I take that interjection from the other side. It is important. Having that sort of service in Western Queensland is important. We need that service. The arrogant talk from those on the other side is absolutely ridiculous. Come out here and tell us how we should do it out there. Do not laugh at people in Western Queensland when they want cardiac services. It shows that members opposite are just arrogant.

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): I call the member for Gregory. I ask the member to come back to the long title of the bill.

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I don't need the assistance of those on my right.

Mr MILLAR: My concern with this, while it is needed, is that we are putting money into preventive health in the right way, that it is making an actual difference for people in regional and rural Queensland. We also need to ensure that we have the services in regional and rural Queensland. Yes, having preventive health is important, but having the actual services such as maternity and dialysis is important for people in Western Queensland. I will always stick up for people in western and regional Queensland. I always will fight for their right to have those services. They pay their taxes just as much as anybody else. They have a right to those services in that area. I will continue to fight for that.

Ms Grace interjected.

Mr MILLAR: I take that interjection from the member opposite. They are always keen to blame the federal government for everything. We have a health minister. What is he picking up a cheque for? Stop blaming the federal government. You have been in government for more than four years. You have a responsibility to deliver these programs. From my understanding, dialysis is something that the Queensland government has to deliver. They delivered it in Rockhampton and Bowen but they cannot give it to Emerald or Longreach.

Mr Lister: Or Warwick.

Mr MILLAR: No. Stop blaming the federal government, because people out there are getting sick and tired of hearing the Labor government blame someone else for what is their fault. Just get on with the job and deliver the services. We understand that sometimes not all services can be delivered, but do not blame someone else for it.

Ms Grace: You are blaming us all the time.

Mr MILLAR: I take that interjection. It just shows the arrogance of the Labor government when it comes to delivering health in Western Queensland. Stop blaming the federal government.

Mr POWER: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I am disappointed. This speech is totally irrelevant to the long title of the bill and only seeking the interjections of others to have a rant. It is very disappointing that this important bill is not being addressed.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I appreciate that you are responding to interactions, but I will bring the member back to the long title of the bill. I have given some latitude there, but I ask that you return to the long title of the bill.

Mr MILLAR: I thank you for your guidance, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr Power: Do you know what it is about?

Mr MILLAR: It is about the Health and Wellbeing Queensland Bill. It is about preventive health. It is about providing opportunities so people can have preventive health. I do know what it is about. I am trying to explain to those opposite and to the member who just interjected that preventive health is great but that we need the services to deal with health problems in regional and rural Queensland. That is where I am coming back to the bill. Yes, it is great—\$35 million. Let us push that forward. Certainly, the Central West Health and Hospital Board are doing a fantastic job in preventive health programs from Longreach to Birdsville to Bedourie in regional Queensland. They are doing a great job, but in Longreach and Emerald they also need health services such as renal dialysis.

I am being relevant to the bill. I understand what the bill is about. We can have all the preventive strategies in place, but if we are not delivering services to the people in Western Queensland it will not be fair on them. I ask that we also look at ensuring that services such as renal dialysis and maternity services are delivered to people in rural and regional Queensland.