




Speech By
Peter Russo
MEMBER FOR TOOHEY

Record of Proceedings, 16 May 2019

PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Federal Election

 **Mr RUSSO** (Toohey—ALP) (2.45 pm): Today I will speak again on the importance of the election of a Shorten Labor government on 18 May. I would first like to deal with the cuts to Queensland public hospitals. Let us be clear about this. Sadly, the Morrison government is ripping \$160 million from Queensland hospitals while giving a \$65 billion tax handout to big business. Let us see how that will impact on the hospitals on the south side. The QEII Hospital is to be cut by more than \$3 million; the Princess Alexandra Hospital is to be cut by more than \$13 million; the Mater Hospital is to be cut by more than \$4 million; the Mater Mother's Hospital is to be cut by more than \$2 million; and the Queensland Children's Hospital is to be cut by more than \$6 million.

In terms of the Morrison government ripping \$160 million from Queensland public hospitals, let us boil it down to what this means for patients in Queensland. The \$160 million cut is equivalent to 240,000 emergency department visits, 44,000 cataract extractions, 6,150 knee replacements or 26,500 deliveries of newborn Queenslanders. While Morrison is fighting for a tax handout for the top end of town, Labor is fighting for better hospitals.

Under Morrison, our local doctors, nurses and hospital staff are all overstretched and underresourced, but Morrison does not care; he is too busy being a show pony to show any empathy to the sick and vulnerable in the state of Queensland. It is time for Morrison to stop looking after the big business end of town. He needs to do something about the profits that the big health insurers are making and address the needs of ordinary Queenslanders.

I will now deal with education. Labor believes that Australian schools should be the best in the world, and every Australian child deserves the best start in life. Bill Shorten and Labor will fully reverse Mr Morrison's cuts so that every school can be a great school. Labor will invest in the next generation including preschool for three- and four-year-olds so that Australian children get 15 years of world-class schooling. Queenslanders never voted for Scott Morrison to cut \$17 billion from schools, but that is what he did. As treasurer, Scott Morrison was behind the worst of the Turnbull government cuts—the cuts to schools, hospitals and Medicare—so they could take care of the big end of town.

On 18 May when a Labor Shorten government is elected, Labor will ensure that no matter which school a child attends, all children will have the same opportunity.