



Speech By  
**Glenn Butcher**


**MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE**

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**PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT**

**Gladstone Hospital, Emergency Department**

 **Mr BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (2.53 pm): I rise to speak about the progress of the construction of the Gladstone Hospital's new \$42 million Emergency Department. Last week in Gladstone, I was joined by Minister Miles and industry and community leaders to tour the wonderful new facility. Construction is on track for completion by May 2020. In 2005 when I ran for office, the people of Gladstone said clearly to me that our hospital needed major infrastructure upgrades. The Palaszczuk government listened and committed to building a brand-new \$42 million ED. When that was first announced, people said that they would believe it when they saw it. I can proudly say that today it can be seen.

The state-of-the-art ED is more than double the size of the current space. It is designed with better flow for patients and a contemporary workspace for our hardworking doctors and nurses in Gladstone. Last week the staff told me that they had input into the design and layout of the new ED and it is truly impressive. There will be a separate waiting room for kids and their parents, secure mental health treatment rooms, a quarantine room, an impressive new entrance to the hospital and so much more.

We went to the last election with a bold plan to deliver record investment in our frontline health services, to hire more frontline doctors and nurses, and to build the hospitals of the future. That is exactly what we are doing in the Gladstone region. In Gladstone we have delivered a record budget for the Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service, 93 new doctors, 192 new nurses and a brand-new state-of-the-art ED. The new department is expected to be operational by August. Work will then start on refurbishing the current ED into a new specialist outpatient department, freeing up space in our hospital for further refurbishments and expansions. For decades, the hospital has been overlooked with no major capital spend on infrastructure or upgrades. The ED is the start of the plans for the Gladstone Hospital, not the end.

There is no doubt that the Palaszczuk Labor government is doing the heavy lifting when it comes to health care in this state. We are being asked to do more with less funding from the federal government. There is a massive shortfall of bulk-billing doctors, with only three out of 11 medical centres in Gladstone offering bulk-billing for new patients. For those that do offer it, there is a two-week wait time just for an appointment to see a doctor. There are no fully bulk-billed practices in the Gladstone or Tannum Sands region, which increases the demand on tertiary health services at the Gladstone Hospital. As they have done for the past seven years, our dedicated staff are picking up the slack from the federal Liberal government and its failure to support the health care of the people of Gladstone and Central Queensland.