




Speech By
Aaron Harper

MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA

Record of Proceedings, 1 December 2021

MOTION

Bundaberg, Health Services

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (5.27 pm): I will back the member for Bundaberg over David Batt any day, I can tell the House that now. I rise to speak in support of the amended motion. This is called 'the scream' for a reason. Pick up your game. Is this the best you have? What a rabble! You are completely out of touch in terms of what is going on here.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Order! Through the chair, member for Thuringowa.

Mr HARPER: Let us be clear: every health system in this country is facing unprecedented demand. We are in times like no other. If you are vaccinated and you catch the virus you will be far less likely to be hospitalised. I am proud to be part of the Palaszczuk government that backs our frontline health staff, that backs the health advice and that makes sure that our health system remains strong by investing in services and infrastructure. I have listened to the awful contributions from the member for Burnett, the member for Ninderry and the member for Nanango. Good grief! Our health committee was in the Wide Bay area not that long ago. A lady held up an envelope and said, 'This is my husband's level 4 home care package, but he died two years prior to getting it.'

We have a federal health system that is not backing in the state health system. It is so poor.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr HARPER: We have an ageing population.

Mr Minnikin interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Chatsworth, you are warned.

Mr HARPER: We have problems with people getting access to GPs. We have people literally dying waiting for home care packages. What does that say? Only 40 per cent of the Queensland population can afford private health insurance, so there is more demand on our public system every single day.

I am dismayed at the motion moved by the member for Burnett as he joins the chorus of members opposite who continue to talk down our hardworking paramedics, doctors, nurses and hospital staff. Our health staff are doing the absolute best job they can, all the while dealing with the unprecedented demand on our free public health system and a global pandemic that has taken more than five million lives.

Time and time again the LNP want to have an argument about following the health advice. Why can they not simply accept the fact that because Queenslanders have done just that we are in such a great position? On Monday on ABC Radio, when talking about the health directives, the member for Burnett said that this week in parliament the LNP would be calling for some relaxations of the sensible

health measures. The member said that the Premier's legacy would be segregation based on medical vaccines and defended the anti-vaxxers, saying they would be blamed for the outbreaks. I do not how many more times those opposite will continue to appease their far-right anti-vax overlords by questioning the measures that have kept and continue to keep us safe from COVID-19. How can the member for Burnett make these comments on radio on Monday and then move a motion about a health system facing challenges? Does he not understand the simple fact that everyone has been working incredibly hard to ensure that many people can get vaccinated so our health system is not under more strain on top of the extreme demand?

We on this side of the House know that vaccination saves lives. We know that if people get vaccinated they are far less likely to go to hospital. We know that the Chief Health Officer's directives play a critical role. It is simple: if you want to help the health system, do not talk it down and do not sack 4,400 nurses. Back the nurses. I do not know how members opposite can lie straight in bed after they sacked 4,000 health staff in this state. They want to talk about the challenges on the health system? We have had to replace all of them.

Members opposite are a rabble and have no idea. They are out of touch. That is why they will be in opposition for years to come. No-one will ever again back an LNP government in this state with the legacy of those opposite in terms of sacking nurses. We back nurses. We are backing our hospitals and investing in our hospitals. Those opposite did it to paramedics, nurses, doctors and allied health staff. What an awful legacy members opposite left this state. We have had to replace all of those jobs. We will continue to back the nurses. We will continue to back the health system and keep delivering. That is what a proud Labor government does.