




Speech By
Ali King

MEMBER FOR PUMICESTONE

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MOTION

Bundaberg, Health Services

 **Ms KING** (Pumicestone—ALP) (5.38 pm): I will awaken myself after that contribution from the member for Mudgeeraba. The reality that the LNP refuse to acknowledge, which they cynically campaign on every single day—

Opposition members interjected.

Ms KING: Well, that woke them up!—is that our Queensland health system has seen simply extraordinary growth in demand for services from Queenslanders who cannot get a GP appointment.

Mr Mickelberg interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Pause the clock. Member for Buderim, you are warned.

Ms KING: Queenslanders cannot get a GP appointment when they need one and are showing up in our EDs in unprecedented numbers as a result. Since 2015 we have seen well over a 20 per cent increase in walk-in ED presentations and an over 45 per cent increase in ambulance arrivals. That is right across Queensland, including in Wide Bay and Bundaberg.

Instead of recognising that Queenslanders need more health care than ever before and asking why, members of the LNP endlessly talk down our health system. We heard that today from the members for Mudgeeraba and Burnett and we hear it every day from the Leader of the Opposition. They pretend to back our healthcare workers, but in fact they are criticising them. They are talking down their commitment and skills, they are undermining the outcomes they achieve for Queenslanders every day, they are backing the fake unions that are scaring Queenslanders about vaccination and they are making false claims about cuts despite our record health budget. Instead of asking why we are seeing this growth and picking up the phone to their Morrison government mates to ask them to help and back our GP system, they are attacking our health system and our health workers. They are out running interference for their LNP mates and Scott Morrison's failures in primary health care.

We have seen the Medicare rebate frozen for years, the number of GPs halved and distribution priority area status stripped from areas right across Queensland, including the Wide Bay and my area of Pumicestone. There are four-week waits to see a GP. GP clinics are closing across Queensland and people are showing up in our EDs in unprecedented numbers as a result. They are very welcome but it is putting pressure on our system. We love caring for Queenslanders. We welcome Queenslanders for care, but we need support and our health workers need support from a better supported GP system.

I recently met with Julie, the practice manager of a large GP practice in the member for Hervey Bay's electorate. She previously ran a GP practice in Caboolture. That GP practice sadly closed down because Julie could not recruit GPs anymore because in 2019 the Morrison government stripped distribution priority area status from our area. Julie could no longer recruit GPs to her practice. That left 1,000 Caboolture patients with nowhere to go and many of them have told me that they have not been

able to get onto the list of a new GP. Many of those people have not been able to find a GP and they have ended up in our EDs. That will be the case right across the Wide Bay as well if Julie does not get more support. If GP practices, like the one she runs, do not get more support—

Mr Watts interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Order! Pause the clock. Member for Toowoomba North, you are warned.

Ms KING: If our GP clinics and our GP system do not get more support then our ED system will continue to fill up.

Let us talk about aged care. Those opposite never want to talk about aged care. Statistics show that there has been a 65 per cent increase in the number of transfers from residential aged-care facilities in the Wide Bay to local Queensland Health emergency departments in the last four years. Meanwhile, the number of nurse positions in aged care across Australia have dropped by 13 per cent. That is how the LNP backs health care right across Queensland. They do not back our healthcare workers. They do not back our healthcare system.

Ms Grace interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Pause the clock. Member for McConnel, you are warned.

Ms KING: Every time the LNP come into this House and attack our hospital staff but are silent on Scott Morrison's GP failures—

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Nanango, you are warned.

Ms KING:—they fail Queenslanders. They have no credibility whatsoever. They are the ones who cut—

Mr Hart interjected.

Ms KING: Nonsense. They are the ones who cut 4½ thousand health workers from our system right across Queensland. They also cut 345 health workers from the Wide Bay health service, 124 from aged care, six from cardiac rehab, 13 from community health, 77 from health and community care and two from emergency medicine. It is a disgrace for them to come in here and claim to be backing our health workers in the Wide Bay.

I ask the LNP: which hospitals did they plan to build when they were last in control of Queensland's health service? We know that the answer is a big fat zero. It was not them building satellite hospitals. It was not them planning to build a new hospital in Bundaberg. They did not back our health system. They did not back our health workers. They did not plan new hospitals. They fail Queenslanders and they fail our health system.