




Speech By
Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE

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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Federal LNP Government, Performance

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (2.10 pm): All Australians know that Scott Morrison failed to prepare our country to deal with the COVID pandemic.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Order! The Leader of the Opposition was heard in relative silence. The Treasurer will be afforded the same courtesy.

Mr DICK: The facts are clear: Scott Morrison did not buy enough vaccines. That failure cost billions in lost economic output and it cost hundreds of lives in outbreaks that have devastated southern states. Scott Morrison failed to build quarantine facilities despite his constitutional responsibility—a constitutional responsibility that is 120 years old. That failure contributed to up to 30 breaches that have caused very costly and very tragic outbreaks across the nation, as well as lockdowns that have devastated livelihoods and small and family businesses across the length and breadth of this nation.

Who could forget February 2020 when this government, the Palaszczuk government, pleaded with the Prime Minister to activate economic support for the looming COVID disaster. Scott Morrison refused. Scott Morrison said he was going to the football. Scott Morrison will not learn the lessons of the pandemic. Labor and LNP states have come together on a bipartisan basis to ask for proper health funding. As one they are asking for proper funding to stop our hospitals from being crushed by demand. What do we hear from Scott Morrison? He says it is a 'shakedown' and he refuses to help.

The reason we have ramping and the reason we have people waiting for elective surgery is because Scott Morrison will not do his job and properly fund the health system in this country. That is what a responsible, accountable federal government will do. They are supposed to fund public hospitals properly as agreed on under the National Health Reform Agreement. They are supposed to run the system of GPs and primary health care, but that system is full, sending more patients to public hospitals run by states. They are supposed to run aged care, they are supposed to run a proper disability system, but we had 600 aged-care and disability clients waiting for placements. Scott Morrison and the federal LNP are failing in their responsibility across the board.

Mr Lister interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Southern Downs, you have been warned under the standing orders.

Mr DICK: The message could not be clearer. If you are a Queenslander who is waiting for elective surgery, if you are a Queenslander stuck in a ramped ambulance, Scott Morrison says this: 'You are on your own!' Scott Morrison is on notice. All states will hold Scott Morrison accountable for the demand that he has placed on our collective hospital systems. I put the state LNP on notice. When they find problems in the health system they will be reflecting on their Prime Minister. We are going to

attribute responsibility for health failings where it lies: to Scott Morrison and the federal LNP government. Today we have heard a lot from those opposite about public hospitals. They cry crocodile tears about hospital ramping and emergency departments. That is all it is—crocodile tears.

Mr Lister interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Southern Downs, you can leave the chamber for one hour.

Whereupon the honourable member for Southern Downs withdrew from the chamber at 2.14 pm.

Mr DICK: The state LNP sacked over 4,000 workers, including 1,200 nurses and midwives. Imagine how much better our hospitals in Queensland would be if those 1,200 nurses and midwives had never been sacked. The LNP cut funding to mental health support, which was the first time in the history of Queensland that had ever occurred. That appalling decision is now history, but to this very day the LNP has never accepted responsibility for what it did to the public health system in this state and has never apologised. Even today those opposite ignore the real reasons for pressure on our hospitals. They say nothing about the crisis in Medicare, in primary care, in aged care or in the National Disability Insurance Scheme. Do not take my word for it. Do not even take the word of Labor. Listen to Brad Hazzard, the LNP minister for health in New South Wales. Listen to the Liberal minister for health in South Australia. Listen to the Liberal minister for health in Tasmania. They all signed the one letter. That letter says—

The admission of NDIS participants and older patients into our hospitals has continued unabated, and there has been no improvement in the discharge rates once these individuals are clinically ready for discharge.

The only person who can fix the pressure facing public hospitals across Australia is Scott Morrison and the LNP. I call on them to fix their problems. I call on them to take responsibility. I call on them to act and to act today.