




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR BROADWATER

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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Queensland Health; Tourism Industry; Hallam, Mr G

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.00 pm): On behalf of every Queensland, I ask: what is going on with the Queensland health system? What is this government doing to fix the Queensland Health crisis? Here we are in parliament for another week and another chapter of the Queensland Health crisis—a book that tells a story of spiralling ambulance ramping, code yellows becoming business as usual, elective surgery waiting lists spiralling out of control, on-time surgeries blown apart and today we hear of a crisis in Mackay, a crisis that started with the accreditation of the department of obstetrics and gynaecology being stripped in September, yet it was not until the microscope was put on this government in the last sitting week that a review was ordered, that those allegedly responsible were stopped from operating.

Today I asked the question. I listened to the prewritten answer that did not answer the question, so I will ask again: how many young mums were put through surgery that was performed by somebody who was not qualified to do it? We will ask those questions. We will ask those questions on behalf of the people of Mackay because their state member is not asking questions. When the shadow health spokesman and I were in Mackay—and we were joined by the members for Whitsunday and Burdekin—we heard harrowing stories of young mums whose lives have been changed forever.

An opposition member: They don't believe them either.

Mr CRISAFULLI: They do not believe them. It appears to me that this government only cares about how things look, not how they are. They will only respond to something when the political problem becomes larger than the medical problem. They only ever respond when it is about image, not about people. We have seen it with border exemptions. We have seen it with one rule for one and one rule for another. It is only when the glare of the media spotlight is put on them that something changes. The member for Kawana will outline one of those system breakdowns shortly.

Who did we hear from at this town hall crisis meeting? We heard from Amy, who can never have another natural birth, who does not believe she wants to go back into that building to ever have another child. We heard stories from people like Leigh, who after giving birth was left with an open wound. She has scarring so bad that it is affecting her quality of life and she will never have children again. We owe it to those people and to many others to ask questions, as we do about the residents of Caboolture whose bodies will never be the same and whose lives will never be the same.

I am sorry but I reckon they have a right to know who operated on them and why it went so horribly wrong. They have a right to know if somebody was operating on them who was operating outside their remit, outside the scope of their practice. They have a right to know what level of oversight there was, what the minister did about it and what systems or actions were put in place. I want to know about the review. I want to know that every resident who wants to have a say has had a say and that they have been listened to.

There are some questions that need to be asked. What is going on at the Caboolture Hospital? What is going on at the Mackay Hospital? What is going wrong with Queensland Health? Long before we knew what coronavirus was, the figures in Queensland Health have been on a downward trajectory. At a time when health has never been more important, this government owes it to the people of Queensland to be honest and transparent and to fix the culture and the problems that exist.

We as an opposition have put forward our solutions. We have gone around the state and we have said what we would like to see done. They have been the suggestions that people have come to us with when we have embarked on these meetings. They want to see data released in real time. They want better triaging so that when people enter an emergency department people like clinical intervention nurses are there to help. They want to see better resourcing. They want to know that doctors and nurses are put back in charge. They want to see a return to frontline services being valued and respected for what they do.

I now want to turn to tourism in this state and again ask the government to chart a pathway out of the pandemic for those tourism operators in those cities that are doing it particularly tough. We have suggested a 20-year plan for tourism. We want to see in the next decade the development of new product offering. We want to see a marketing campaign when the eyes of the world are on us during the Olympic Games. Then we want to know that the decade after that will be a golden era for Queensland tourism.

At the moment the government does not have a 20-week tourism plan. We only have to look at what the other states are doing to chart a course out of the pandemic in 2022 to know that this government is stuck and that it has all its strategies in one basket. The tourism industry that we want to see for Queensland is one that uses its natural beauty, that makes sure that we are at the forefront of new product development and that we respect what has made us great in the past and look for opportunities in the future.

In New South Wales at the moment there is a \$530 million package that focuses on major events, aviation attraction, CBD revitalisation and marketing. Our spend is paltry in comparison. If we look at spending on business support across the nation, we are towards the back of the pack. I was speaking with operators in Cairns just the other day who say that the Tourism and Hospitality Sector Hardship Program, which has been open for a few weeks now, appears not to be meeting the needs of people.

Mr McDonald: It's missed the mark.

Mr CRISAFULLI: It has missed the mark. The operators are saying, 'What now? Will there be another round? Will the terms be broadened? Will money go towards attracting aviation?' One way or another there has to be an acknowledgement that right now the city of Cairns is on its knees, the Whitsundays is doing it tough and the Gold Coast still is not back to its best. Right now is when the government needs to support those tourism operators.

I have said repeatedly that it is a knife fight for market share in places like the Gold Coast. Right now Sydney has been given a sword and Labor has handed Brisbane a butter knife. That is the conflict that exists. We are going into a period where the first mover will have the advantage. We must be that first mover. We cannot accept that other opportunities will flow to other places. Today I read some comments from Chris Mills of Queensland Airports Limited. He says—

I'd be concerned Queensland will fall behind the other states when it comes to attracting international airlines back to the state.

Do you want to know why? It is because the government has chosen a course of fear rather than charting a course of hope. They have constantly moved the goalposts. They have constantly sought to find every reason to blame everyone else. I choose hope over fear. I do not want 2022 in this state to be defined by a disease. I want 2022 to be the year that we make this state the place where people want to do business—in agriculture, in tourism, in mining—and where there are magical opportunities for business relocation in the south-east for medicine and for education. That is what a great Queensland looks like.

Of course vaccines are the key to that pathway and we will continue to go around the state and promote that. The best way to give people confidence to get a vaccine is not to scare them by telling them you are going to take Christmas but to tell them what life will look like.

As I have said repeatedly as we have gone around the state, if you believe in the small and family business owner at the end of the street and the people they employ, get vaccinated. If you believe in maybe one day cuddling a loved one who lives interstate, get vaccinated.

Finally, I wish to place on record my sincere congratulations to Greg Hallam who, at the end of this week, finishes his tenure of nearly three decades as CEO of the Local Government Association of Queensland. Greg has been a fearless advocate, and the fact that his retirement comes at the end of

a conference shows his dedication to that organisation. Councils in this state are important and they have never felt more undervalued. They have never felt more pressured. They have never felt more like the big hand of government is over them. Greg Hallam has fought hard, and I commend Alison Smith, who is moving into that role. She is someone who will do a fine job, and we on this side of the House look forward to working with an empowered local government sector for years to come.