



Speech By  
**Julieanne Gilbert**


**MEMBER FOR MACKAY**

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Record of Proceedings, 1 December 2021

**MOTION**

**Bundaberg, Health Services**

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (5.49 pm): I support the motion as amended. If you ever want to know what really separates our government from those opposite, you need only look at the way they approach the health system. They see health as a cost. They see it as a burden—a burden on the budget—and a portfolio ripe with opportunities to slash funding and to sack workers. And didn't they set about that with a lot of enthusiasm? Of the 14,000 public servants they sacked—many of them by email; they could not even do it nicely—over 4,000 of them were health workers and 1,800 of those were nurses and midwives.

**Mr Millar** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Order! Let's put you on a warning, shall we? Member for Gregory, you are on a warning.

**Mrs GILBERT:** This year's budget included a record \$22.2 billion investment in health—53.3 per cent more than in the LNP's final budget in 2014. No HHS was spared by the LNP cuts including Wide Bay, which lost 345 health staff under the Newman government. I was really surprised when the member for Nanango defended sacking healthcare workers after the flood. That would have been devastating. The budget for Wide Bay this year was almost \$725 million—an increase of \$267 million, or 58.8 per cent, from what they received under the Newman government's last budget. Since we were elected, an additional 570 doctors, nurses and allied health professionals have joined the front line just in Wide Bay.

**Ms GRACE:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I think we need to be in our seats in the chamber. You just made the ruling.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The opposition whip is clearly undertaking duties related to their role.

**Mrs GILBERT:** We recognise the challenges that communities face. That is why we continue to invest in the provision of health services in the regions, including our commitment to build a new hospital in Bundaberg. The health needs of regional Queenslanders were never more neglected than they were during the dark years of the Newman government.

It is disappointing that this motion has been moved by the member for Burnett. I understand that he is undermining the health advice from the Chief Health Officer on vaccinations. The member for Burnett is not serving the interests of the people of Wide Bay. When the virus arrives, as it will, and those infected are not protected by vaccinations, what comfort will the member for Burnett offer those who become gravely ill because they have followed his reckless advice?

The processes for the construction of the Bundaberg Hospital are underway, with \$15 million allocated in this budget for the purchase of the preferred site and associated project costs to enable detailed site planning. This follows the \$6.6 million that we have already provided for the completion of a detailed business case. It is a project that the member for Burnett should be supporting instead of presenting motions that seek to undermine it.

Standing up for Burnett means backing projects that will save the lives of people who live there—like a new hospital to service the needs of the growing population of the Wide Bay area. I represent the regions too, and I will always fight to ensure that the people who live in regional Queensland get a fair deal when it comes to essential services. It is one of the reasons I am so proud to be a member of the Palaszczuk government, which continues to invest in health services and infrastructure across Queensland.

This motion is just a further reflection of the confusion that is gripping the opposition who try to make up a fake health crisis while seeming to ignore the genuine health threat posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The challenges we face require a serious and measured response, not the immature and negative campaigns that are being waged on a daily basis by the LNP. The new Bundaberg Hospital will deliver enhanced and expanded health services for the people of Bundaberg.