



Speech By
Stephen Andrew

MEMBER FOR MIRANI

Record of Proceedings, 23 February 2021


APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) (2020-2021) BILL

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Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation (2020-2021) Bill

Health and Environment Committee, Report

 **Mr ANDREW** (Mirani—PHON) (5.03 pm): I rise to make a contribution to this debate as a member of the Health and Environment Committee. I thank the secretariat and all of the members of that committee. In this budget it was good to see funds allocated to upgrade Sarina Hospital. I hope that small regional towns such as Mount Morgan and Sarina are supported into the future by the government so they can look after their local communities and remain in service.

The health and environment portfolios would have to be two of the most important, given the current COVID-19 pandemic. They will also be instrumental in paving the way forward for farmers and graziers to negotiate their way through the new regulatory framework which has been in some ways off target and has caused a lot of hardship for farmers in reef catchment regions. Regulations are being handed down with little consideration of the time frames or the extra cost that people on the land must absorb as they struggle to implement the many changes government has thrust upon them.

The financial audit report for 2020 shows that 11 out of our 16 hospital services reported operating losses for the 2019-20 financial year. That is three more than in the previous year, despite only one hospital having budgeted for an operating loss in 2019-20. Some seven hospitals have now made an overall loss since they were formed back in 2012. To give a dollar amount, 11 HSSs within Queensland have suffered from a combined operating loss of \$82 million since 2012. On a positive note, there was an increase in the number of frontline health employees of four per cent. I cannot thank them enough for what they have done for us in Queensland during the pandemic.

It also concerns me greatly that there were 43 deficiencies reported in the audit, including 13 related to the implementation of the new IT ordering system; a lack of signed service level agreements between the department and the HHS and outstanding balances; inadequate procurement procedures and policies; financial reporting and reconciliation issues; and deficient asset valuations and processes. It was disappointing to hear from the Health Ombudsman that complaints have doubled in six years since the new system was introduced, with 9,703 complaints received over that period. It was also concerning to hear the results of the medical training survey done in the state and around the country. Some 28 per cent of the 4,300 Queensland doctors in training surveyed reported experiencing a lot of bullying, harassment, discrimination and racism.

I can already see that my appointment to the Health and Environment Committee will prove both very interesting and challenging, but I look forward to working with my fellow committee members to address the various issues going forward—making sure that we do the best for our farmers and the best for the health system in looking at cutting costs to make the HHSs a more viable proposition.