




Speech By
Ali King

MEMBER FOR PUMICESTONE

Record of Proceedings, 12 May 2022

HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Ms KING** (Pumicestone—ALP) (3.32 pm): It is always very interesting to follow the member for Bonney. I will move on before I say something improper. It is very interesting that he chose to join the LNP, run for the party and even take a shadow ministry role in the party that was responsible for sacking 4,400 of the nurses that he congratulated and adulated today. By contrast, on International Nurses Day all of our Labor caucus are united in thanking and congratulating the nurses and midwives who deliver for our communities every single day.

Our Health and Environment Committee travelled the length and breadth of Queensland for our report into primary, allied and private health care, aged care and the NDIS. We heard the same everywhere we went across Queensland—that is, every aspect of health care controlled and funded by the federal government was at risk of collapse. That pressure is overflowing straight into Queensland's public hospitals. Since 2016 there has been a tsunami of increase in demand for health care: ED attendances up 37 per cent; ambulance activity up 30 per cent; and more triple 0 calls than ever before.

I almost hesitate to touch on the issues of long-stay patients that were raised by the member for Southport. Every single HHS told us that they are proud to care for long-stay patients who are waiting for aged-care and NDIS placements. What the member has forgotten is that it is not about beds; it is about people—people who should be in aged care, who are ready for discharge, who are medically well, who are deconditioning every single day of the months and years that they spend in hospital; young people who deserve to have NDIS accommodation and are suffering from the lack of engagement, not having their routines, not being in a homely environment for every single day of the up to three years that they spend in hospital after they are ready for discharge. It is a shame and a disgrace.

In Queensland today 512 people are in those long-stay beds when they could be in a home-like environment. That is equal to Caboolture Hospital plus Redcliffe Hospital. It is disgraceful inaction on the part of the federal government. In fact, I would go so far as to say that the Morrison federal government is stealing the equivalent of two major hospitals from Queenslanders every single day they allow this to go on. It is our state Labor government that has worked so hard to reduce the number of people trapped in those long-stay beds.

The issue of the GP crisis is something that I have been vocal on ever since I was elected and my constituents started to raise it with me. Every single day people in my community and in communities that we heard from across Queensland are waiting weeks and months for GP appointments. GPs are underpaid and underappreciated and GP businesses are failing. That is because of the Morrison government's refusal to raise MBS payments and also its absolute refusal to rethink the DPA system that is limiting access to care for GP clients across Queensland. In my community we had our DPA status stripped from us in 2019. It has become increasingly hard for people to see a GP. If people cannot get to see a GP their only doorway to care is through the front door of a hospital ED.

The member for Southport and the other members opposite who have spoken in this place are turning their back on those Queenslanders who are trying desperately to access the primary care that they need. Right across the primary health spectrum from NDIS cuts to aged-care neglect to failing GP practices to underperforming PHNs, these issues have all got two things in common. They are adding to the pressure on our Queensland hospitals and underfunding them is saving the Morrison government money. It is shameful.

What are the Queensland LNP saying about this? Are they phoning up Scott Morrison and the LNP federal government to ask for our fair share? No. The Leader of the Opposition called our committee's inquiry a sham. He is insulting every single submitter who showed up to our hearings across Queensland and talked about how they could not get a GP appointment or how their NDIS plans were being cut. It is disgraceful. The Leader of the Opposition is gaslighting every Queenslanders who is waiting three, four or six weeks to get a GP appointment. When they talk down this report, the LNP in Queensland are running a protection racket for their Morrison government mates who will not give Queensland our fair share, and it is disgraceful.