




Speech By
Ann Leahy

MEMBER FOR WARREGO

Record of Proceedings, 25 May 2022

MOTION

Central Queensland, Health Services

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (5.10 pm): I rise to support the motion moved by the member for Mudgeeraba. The town of Biloela is crying out for a CT scanner. It is estimated that up to 46 patients per month have to make a 300-kilometre round trip to either Gladstone or Rockhampton just for their routine CT scans. These CT scans take the ambulance and two staff away from the Biloela community every day. Rural doctors and patients are crying out for CT scanners in their communities, yet this Labor government sells off the retired CT scanners to external buyers rather than placing them for use in regional hospitals. This Labor government sells these assets rather than placing these useable CT scanners in rural and regional hospitals where they are needed.

Mrs Frecklington: Which is what the clinicians want.

Ms LEAHY: I will take that interjection: that is what the clinicians want. Not only is it CT scanners that rural and regional hospitals need; funding from this government to operate their X-ray machines on weekends would also help. Patients from the Roma Hospital come to me regularly about being denied X-rays on weekends.

Over the Easter weekend we had thousands of people at events like bull rides, motocross and rodeos—plenty of potential for broken bones. However, when a mum and her daughter presented to the Roma Hospital on Easter Saturday with a suspected broken elbow they were told by the doctor, 'Come back on Tuesday. We can't order an X-ray.' The Labor government is failing the doctors and nurses at the front line, denying them funding to use the X-ray machines on weekends at Roma Hospital and others.

This Labor government have had seven years to bring back birthing in Chinchilla and all they can do is another review. When the LNP were in government they opened the birthing suites in Chinchilla, Cooktown and Beaudesert. There were up to 100 births per year at Chinchilla under the LNP. Contrast this to the Labor government, which has closed 34 rural birthing units since 2001. Last month I was contacted by Bryana Thompson of Chinchilla, who was 36 weeks pregnant with her third child. If Bryana went into labour, she would have to drive herself an hour to Dalby as her partner works away. She was scared she would give birth in her car on the Warrego Highway with her two young children on board. Fortunately, she went into labour when her partner was home on Anzac Day. However, she spent half of her labour in a car driving to the Dalby Hospital and needed immediate medical care following the birth. After seven years, this lazy Labor government does not even have a midwife who lives in Chinchilla. I am advised that the four midwives who service Chinchilla live up to two hours drive away—at Ipswich, Jandowae, Toowoomba and Dalby.

Earlier in the year Beatrix Bracefield was born on the side of the Warrego Highway. At the time, her mum kept having nightmares that she was not going to catch Beatrix in time and she was just going to go 'splat' on the asphalt. Her mum was unable to use the only birthing suite at Chinchilla Hospital because it had been turned into a COVID-19 ward, which at the time had no COVID patients in it. Beatrix

Bracefield's birth certificate says, 'Place of birth: Warrego Highway'. She will have that for the rest of her life, thanks to the Palaszczuk Labor government. That is how the Palaszczuk Labor government treats women and children. It is shameful! Instead of employing midwives and recruiting doctors in Chinchilla, this Labor government has made the Chinchilla birthing suites into offices and COVID wards. It is an absolute disgrace!

This Labor government need to answer how long it will take for the Darling Downs Hospital and Health Service to review the maternity service—again. Is this review going to gather dust on the bookshelf, like the previous Rural Maternity Taskforce review by the previous health minister and now Deputy Premier? Mums like Bryana Thompson, Yvette Bracefield, Amanda Vonhoff, Ursula Keating, Amanda Allen and others do not want the reviews gathering dust. They want midwives, doctors and birthing in Chinchilla. This Labor government has a health crisis, and it has been a complete failure for mothers and babies in Chinchilla.