




Speech By
Ann Leahy

MEMBER FOR WARREGO

Record of Proceedings, 26 May 2022

HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (3.11 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on report No. 18, *Inquiry into the provision of primary, allied and private health care, aged care and NDIS care services and its impact on the Queensland public health system*. I wish to declare that my partner is a chair of a not-for-profit aged-care facility and that this is reflected on the register of interests as required. I thank the members of the committee for their work involved in producing the report.

I also want to thank the nurses, midwives and the allied health specialists, especially those in my electorate, who I know work tirelessly to support their patients, particularly those who work in the regional hospitals of Mungindi, Augathella, Cunnamulla, Quilpie and Surat who have had long periods without doctors in their hospitals. It has been the nurses in these hospitals who have kept the doors open and kept the health facilities operating.

It is the appalling record of the Palaszczuk Labor government which has left the hardworking local nurses and the on-call medical retrieval teams to provide emergency health care and health care in those facilities. For instance, the Mungindi Hospital was without a doctor for 13 days; the Augathella Hospital, for five days in October 2021; the Cunnamulla Hospital was without a doctor for 12 days in December 2021; and the Quilpie Hospital was without a doctor for 15 days in January and February this year. I have also been advised that the Surat Hospital has had days with no doctor this year and patients have been diverted to Roma Hospital. The Palaszczuk Labor government has failed to properly resource these regional hospitals and the Minister for Health should show some leadership and help these hospitals and HHSs.

This report talks at length about the problems in health. It tried to blame the LNP government in Canberra. It is now the responsibility of the members opposite and their Labor colleagues in Canberra to deal with the problems that they have outlined in this report. It was easy for members opposite to wave this report around during the last sitting and blame Scott Morrison, but now it is up to Labor and Anthony Albanese to answer these questions and deal with the problems in the report.

An opposition member: It won't be easy under Albanese!

Ms LEAHY: It won't be easy under Albanese. Of the 40 recommendations, 36 are aimed at the federal government. Only 14 recommendations even mention the state Labor government which has a health crisis on its hands with the worst ambulance ramping in the nation. Under Labor the elective surgery waiting lists have nearly doubled. Under Labor 34 rural and regional birthing locations across Queensland have closed down. Contrast that to the LNP which, when it was in government, re-established birthing services in Chinchilla, Cooktown and Beaudesert.

The Labor members opposite want to talk about the long-stay aged-care patients in hospitals to avoid the real issues, such as ambulance ramping, the blowouts on the waiting lists and the closures of regional birthing services. I say to the members opposite that the time for talk, the time for reports, is over; it is their colleagues in Canberra that must deliver. They need to deliver for people like the worker

who presented to a hospital in my electorate with a serious workplace accident—a crushed and partially amputated thumb. It fell to the employer to transfer this patient to the Toowoomba Base Hospital as the local hospital decided the injury was not urgent enough to be flown out to Toowoomba. The local hospital did not communicate any details of the patient and on arrival at Toowoomba the patient and his employer, who was supporting him, had to go through regular admissions in the emergency department. They were quite lucky to get in actually. The Toowoomba Base Hospital did not have a surgeon who could deal with the injury and the patient was then sent to St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital in Brisbane where the operation finally occurred 56 hours after the first presentation to the hospital. The whole time the patient was in need of pain relief. The patient experienced a crude method of putting injections directly into an open wound and the nurse pushed a needle right through the thumb causing pain and traumatised this patient.

There is a health crisis in this state. Regional hospitals do not have doctors, ambulance ramping is the worst in the country, the waiting lists are blowing out and regional birthing services have not been reinstated and babies are being born on the side of highways. Quite frankly, Queenslanders deserve better from this Palaszczuk Labor government. I sincerely hope that this Palaszczuk Labor government can actually get that deal of funding from the federal Labor government, but I will not hold my breath in relation to that.