




Speech By
Barry O'Rourke

MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON

Record of Proceedings, 25 May 2022

MOTION

Central Queensland, Health Services

 **Mr O'ROURKE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (5.26 pm): I rise to support the amendments moved by the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services. When it comes to health investment in Central Queensland I am proud to stand by the record of the Palaszczuk Labor government. The people of Rockhampton know that only Labor can deliver more doctors, more nurses, more allied health staff, more ambos and more hospitals for our region. This government has made record investments in health and I am pleased to say that most recently we delivered a record \$691 million budget for Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service. That is a 48 per cent increase on the final budget of the previous LNP government.

Since we came to office in 2015 the Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service work force has grown by 119 doctors, 498 nurses and 153 allied health staff. In addition to these new workers, we have also delivered an 84-bed expansion to the Rockhampton Hospital, a new 10-bed ICU in Rockhampton, an extension to the Rockhampton Hospital coronary care unit and a 42-bed drug and rehabilitation treatment facility in Rockhampton. No-one denies that the health service is currently under enormous pressure. That is the case in every health service across the country. For example, there have been 92,000 presentations in emergency departments in the Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service in the last calendar year, a 22 per cent increase—

Mrs D'ATH: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. There is a lot of noise in this chamber that is not interjections. There are members rudely speaking loudly so that the member cannot be heard in the House.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Order! I will not have noise while I am trying to take a point of order.

Mrs D'ATH: I ask that members show respect and allow the member to be heard.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I agree with your point of order. I would ask members to show that respect. I am taking advice on a matter.

Mr O'ROURKE: As I said, this is a 22 per cent increase compared to 2015. That is 10 times the increase in population over that time period.

Last financial year the number of transfers from residential aged-care facilities to our hospitals increased by nearly 60 per cent on the previous year. In that same time period, overall ambulance transfers increased 15 per cent to 38,872. Right now the Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service is caring for 46 long-stay patients who no longer require hospital care because there are not enough aged-care or disability care placements for them. This is the responsibility of the federal LNP government.

The Morrison government has totally failed our elderly and our most disadvantaged. There are real challenges. The people of Central Queensland can be assured that a Palaszczuk government is working tirelessly to provide the funding and the staff to deliver the world-class health care that all

Queenslanders expect and deserve. Unfortunately, the LNP government does not value the health of my constituents as much as I do. That is why when they were in government they cut just under 200 staff from the Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service, they cut \$1.6 billion from Queensland Health and they cut funding to dozens of important community health organisations, many of which service my electorate.

The LNP like to talk about improving our health system, but at the first opportunity when they came into government they tore down as much as possible. In opposition they have refused to acknowledge the pressures coming from the aged-care, disability care and primary care sectors. They would rather complain than advocate for constituents. They were more interested in keeping the previous Morrison government in power than they were in finding real solutions to the pressures in our health system. We have a real shortage of GPs. We have a real shortage of disability care beds and aged-care beds.

I want to put on record my thanks to the health staff we have. They do an absolutely amazing job under lots of pressure, and I thank them for the great work they do each and every day. Thankfully, with the election of the Albanese Labor federal government, Central Queensland residents can be confident that the state and federal governments will be working together, taking responsibility and doing the hard work to improve our healthcare system.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: A number of speakers this evening have referred to the first order of general business on the *Notice Paper* today, the health committee report No. 18. That report is currently being debated by the House, so members will cease referring to that report. Members can raise issues that are touched on by that report but they cannot refer to the outcomes of that report or that report itself.