




Speech By
Dr Christian Rowan

MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

Record of Proceedings, 12 May 2022

HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (3.47 pm): I rise to address report No. 18 of the Health and Environment Committee, which was an 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. At the outset, on International Nurses Day can I acknowledge all nurses across Queensland and across Australia, particularly those working at the Wesley Hospital and St Andrews War Memorial Hospital.

There were some important considerations and recommendations in this report, and I certainly have to acknowledge the work of all of the committee members, all of the submitters and all of those who attended the inquiry. It is important that we try and get a health system not only here in Queensland but also across Australia that is right not only for patients but also, importantly, the clinicians, doctors, nurses and allied health professionals who work in that system and are trying to provide good quality care to patients, whether they be in primary care, the disability sector, in aged care or in our hospital system.

Unfortunately, this inquiry only examines those aspects relating to the federal government without comprehensively examining all matters relating to Queensland's public health and hospital system. As such, as we have heard, this inquiry has allowed itself to be highly politicised and has been perceptually seen by many as an attempt by the Labor government to seek electoral political advantage. I think that is very unfortunate, when there are some detailed considerations and recommendations within the report that are for the health system. Because of when it was commissioned, when it was released and when it is being debated—during a federal election campaign—unfortunately, for many it can be seen to be an attempt to politicise important issues for electoral advantage.

I think Queenslanders are absolutely tired of the continual blame-shifting between state and Commonwealth governments and, particularly in this case, the Queensland Labor government and their inability to take responsibility for Queensland's hospital system. I heard the member for Thuringowa talk about the federal AMA president. I accept the comments of the federal AMA president, but here in Queensland the president of the Australian Medical Association of Queensland, Professor Chris Perry, said that this report 'smacks of blame shifting'. He said that the report—

... helps a federal Labor campaign when what we really need are state and federal governments to collaborate on solutions, instead of ducking and weaving to point the finger at each other.

Professor Perry also said—

The Queensland state government has not provided an adequate response to our Ramping Roundtable Action Plan that has clear and realistic steps to address hospital bed block and ambulance ramping.

Within this report, we can see that there has not been a comprehensive examination of ambulance ramping in Queensland, and all Queenslanders know why. It is because under the state Labor government Queensland now has the worst ramping of ambulances in the country—

Mr Stevens: Record.

Dr ROWAN: I take the interjection from the member for Mermaid Beach. We have record ambulance ramping here in Queensland. At Ipswich Hospital, 56 per cent of patients are being left on stretches in corridors and hallways for longer than 30 minutes. At the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, one out of every two ambulances is ramped. At the Princess Alexandra Hospital, ambulance ramping is at 46 per cent. Let us not forget that it has been over a year since the state Labor government announced a further \$100 million to fix ambulance ramping in Queensland. All we have seen as a result is that here in Queensland under this state Labor government ambulance ramping has got worse. Patients are waiting up to eight hours for an ambulance to arrive and police are having to be used as paramedics, with the Queensland Police Service now also experiencing ramping at Queensland's public hospitals.

What is needed here in Queensland? This state Labor government needs to look at models of care and it certainly needs to look at proper industrial reform. It needs to look at management accountability and having plans for patients who are in hospital—looking at their length of stay, comparing that to national average lengths of stay, looking at the blocks that occur with respect to proper discharge planning and ensuring that patients get the care they need here in Queensland.

Importantly, under the federal Morrison LNP government, there have been some positive achievements. Annual hospital funding in 2022-23 is at a record \$27.2 billion, compared to just over \$13 billion in 2012-13 under the last federal Labor government. Medicare GP bulk-billing rates have risen to 88.8 per cent under the federal LNP Morrison government, up from 82.2 per cent under the previous federal Labor government. The federal coalition government have subsidised more medicines on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme and they have subsidised telehealth services. What we need here is cooperation between the Queensland state government and the Commonwealth government. We need mature leadership, detailed discussions and, when it comes to those opposite, meaningful engagement and not facile and puerile contributions.