




Speech By
Hon. Glenn Butcher

MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE

Record of Proceedings, 25 May 2022

MOTION

Central Queensland, Health Services

 **Hon. GJ BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing and Minister for Water) (5.58 pm): I rise to support the amendments moved by the health minister tonight. One of the reasons I do so is because those opposite are asking why the 2030 plan has not been delivered yet, even though it is only 2022. Who was the smart mathematician in the LNP who said, 'Hey, there's a 2030 plan that we need to address but it hasn't been delivered'? It is 2022. Der! There are eight years to go. There is plenty of time to deliver it.

Tonight I rise to talk about the fantastic Labor members who are based in Central Queensland: Barry O'Rourke in Rockhampton, Brittany Lauga in Keppel and Julieanne Gilbert in Mackay. They are doing a sterling job in this House to support their communities, particularly when it comes to health. There are no greater voices than those three members in this place—as well as me—talking about health to the Health Minister and about what we need in Central Queensland.

Tonight, I also want to talk about why we see so many people presenting themselves to our local hospital system in Central Queensland. It is because the former prime minister of Australia let down the people of Central Queensland by not letting them attend their own bulk-bill doctors in their areas. There is not one bulk-bill doctor in Gladstone who can look at a person's health issues prior to them having to present to the Gladstone Hospital. That is a problem. On top of that, the previous member for Callide, who was part of the backbench opposite, did not for one day stand up to the federal LNP when it stopped international doctors coming into Gladstone who could potentially have worked at our GPs and at our Gladstone hospitals. That was a massive failure of the federal LNP. The voiceless former member for Callide never ever stood up in terms of getting doctors into our hospitals and local clinics.

I am proud of the track record that we have delivered on health in Gladstone: a brand new \$42 million accident and emergency service delivered in Gladstone in the first term that I was the new member in Gladstone. That hospital and its fantastic staff are delivering for the people of Gladstone. We are an industrial city. We have some of the best people in Gladstone who are being treated at our Gladstone emergency hospital right now, as we speak.

In Gladstone, we have also supported the Gladstone community when the private Mater Hospital left Gladstone. We now have no specialist services for private hospitals in the Gladstone region. Who filled the void when the maternity service from the Mater walked out of Gladstone? It was this government. We put \$1 million into the Gladstone Hospital so that women who used to go to the Mater Hospital could give birth at the Gladstone Hospital. Not only that, but we now are revamping that hospital to make sure we can continue to give services not only to the people of Gladstone but also to the people of Central Queensland who want speciality services in the Gladstone region.

I can talk about Gladstone all night, but, as opposed to tonight's motion, we are telling those opposite that we are delivering. We have nearly doubled our investment in the Central Queensland Health and Hospital Service since coming to government. That investment is seeing more doctors,

nurses and midwives on the ground continuing to look after the people of Central Queensland. We are not going to sit here and listen to those opposite tell us that we are not delivering on health in Central Queensland, because we continue to deliver for those regions. I am particularly proud of the fact that we are looking after vulnerable people in our community—not only those being left behind by the previous federal government in the aged-care facilities, on which they have not spent one cent in the Gladstone region. We continue to make sure that we are supporting mothers coming into our Central Queensland hospitals, those most in need of support services and those needing renal services to make sure they are taken care of. We also will continue to deliver into the future.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Order! The member used some unparliamentary language during that contribution. I ask you to withdraw.

Mr BUTCHER: I withdraw.