




Speech By
Julianne Gilbert

MEMBER FOR MACKAY

Record of Proceedings, 26 May 2022

HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (3.36 pm): I also put on the record my recognition of National Sorry Day. The Health and Environment Committee's 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*, is very timely. I congratulate and thank all of the doctors, nurses, and allied health workers—and the auxiliary staff, namely, the cleaners, the people in the kitchen and the people answering the phones who do not always get acknowledged and recognised—because it is their contribution to the whole of those health facilities that means that we can deliver quality care to Queenslanders. I thank each and every one of them for their dedicated work. We appreciate what they do.

In living memory, we have not seen such pressure placed on our health system. This report outlines the pinch points. I am pleased to report that in principle the Palaszczuk government supports all of the recommendations. In my region, there has been huge pressure on our local GPs. At one point there were no bulk-billing clinics at all in my home city because of the former Morrison federal government's freezing of the Medicare rebate. Families relying on bulk-billing to be able to afford to go to the doctor no longer could get in to see their GP. They started using the accident and emergency department. This then became their GP service. We all know that that is not what accident and emergency services are meant for. It just puts a terrible strain on our local hospital and our local health providers. How did the former member for Dawson, George Christensen, respond to this lack of bulk-billing crisis? In his usual compassionate way—

Mr Harper: Did he go on holiday?

Mrs GILBERT: Yes. From his holiday he said, 'If you can't afford to see a GP, go to accident and emergency; it's your right.' This callous response is reflected in just about everything he ever did: 'Just flick it off to the taxpayers of Queensland.'

The member for Warrego has spoken several times in the House about the lack of doctors in her area. I have visited her area as the Assistant Minister for Health and Regional Health Infrastructure. There are wonderful people working in the health facilities in all of the places she mentioned. It has been hard to get rural generalists out to those areas when we had a former federal government that took placements from our Queensland universities and gave them to New South Wales. We are working hard in this regard in Queensland. We are setting up programs where we are training doctors in the regions. The former federal government ripped the funding for places out of Queensland and gave it to New South Wales.

I would like to ask the member for Warrego how much time she spent lobbying and begging David Littleproud to have those placements given back to Queensland so that those communities can have doctors. She cannot come in here and keep bleating if she is not going to ask those people in charge of those areas to help out. It is all talk—

Ms Camm interjected.

Mr Smith interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Bush): The member for Whitsunday and the member for Bundaberg will quit their quarrelling across the chamber.

Mrs GILBERT: I would love to see more rural generalists trained in Queensland. It is lucky we have an Albanese federal Labor government. Those opposite should be pleased that they are rid of the former member of Dawson. He has joined the party that does not even believe in medical science—and that is probably where he needs to be. It is not just the general public that is talking about the lack of training for doctors and bulk-billing—

(Time expired)

Mrs Gilbert: I was only just getting started.