



Speech By  
**Julieanne Gilbert**

**MEMBER FOR MACKAY**

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Record of Proceedings, 17 August 2022


**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL**

**APPROPRIATION BILL**

**Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)**

**Appropriation Bill**

**Health and Environment Committee, Report**

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (11.53 am): Isn't it great that the member for Maroochydore has had an epiphany and realised that we do need health services? Maybe she should be talking to her side about not cutting medical officers as part of their policies. We need to have health workers; we do not need for them to be cut and sacked, and we do not need our health services being slashed.

Instead of attacking health workers, I would like to thank all of our health workers, who put Queenslanders front and centre. The strength of our health minister has shone through in the tough, unprecedented times during the health pandemic that we are still living through. The way that Minister D'Ath has worked with Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk has been commendable. They have both kept cool heads to make sure that Queenslanders keep safe compared to our southern states. I thank all of our health teams around the state who have tirelessly immunised our population, heading out to our sporting carnivals, Bunnings, shopping centres—anywhere they could find people and give them an opportunity to be immunised so they did not become gravely ill from COVID-19. That is not forgetting the testing crews that were out there in PPE for long hours.

Unfortunately, there are those in our communities who are still spreading misinformation about vaccination, and they are putting people's lives at risk. The member for Mirani is still out at rallies with anti-vaxxers, waxing lyrical about the dangers of vaccination and being outraged that we have approved vaccination for children. Shame on him for scoring cheap political points through these stunts.

On the back of our historic Path to Treaty signing, I give a special shout-out to our First Nations health workers who are working in all areas of our health system. The Queensland Health and Hospitals Plan has seen a record \$23.6 billion in operational funds in the 2022-23 budget, supporting our workers and our patients. In the Mackay region, the Palaszczuk government has increased the operational funding for our health services to \$562 million in the budget. This is an increase of 9.2 per cent on the previous year. We have seen operational funding for the Mackay HHS increase by 75 per cent since coming to government, or, put another way, \$241 million up from \$321 million in 2014-15.

We see a massive and historic spend on health infrastructure underway. This is the legacy of our state Labor government, because that is what this side of the House does. My heart is in regional Queensland, and that is why I am excited about phase 2 of the building rural and remote program. This building program will replace health facilities and staff accommodation by investing a staggering

\$943.5 million over seven years to replace ageing infrastructure in a range of hospital and health services including: Torres and Cape; North West; Cairns and Hinterland; and Mackay, where we see 128 new beds and a \$250 million spend—and not forgetting the Sarina Hospital, with a \$31 million build which is in the midst of construction. There is also the Darling Downs, Central West, Townsville, West Moreton and Wide Bay.

In the first tranche we will see the Moranbah Hospital being rebuilt. I thank Mayor Baker for her advocacy of this project. We will see shovels in the ground next year. This development will see a new improved ED which is connected to the wards. There will also be a helipad on hospital grounds along with medical imaging and staff accommodation. This is great news for this area. This phase will include facilities at Bamaga, Normanton, Pormpuraaw, Tara and Cow Bay. There are tenders out for new and improved healthcare facilities in five rural locations across the south, central and north-west regions including Blackwater, Morven, St George, Charleville and Camooweal.

*(Time expired)*