




Speech By
Lachlan Millar

MEMBER FOR GREGORY

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MOTION

Central Queensland, Health Services

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (5.31 pm): Our health system is in crisis. It has been in crisis for the last seven years. I remember Anna Bligh saying when she was premier that the health system was a basket case. Her basket case is better than your basket case! We have ramping and absolute chaos in our health system. The health system in Queensland is an absolute disgrace, and in regional Queensland it is getting worse.

Labor like to say how things look but they do not realise how things are. I will tell them how things are in our health system. People have had enough of our failing health system—not delivering on elective surgeries, not being able to see people in emergency departments.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Order, members! Pause the clock. Sorry to interrupt, member for Gregory. I am having trouble hearing you over the interjections of your own members. I ask all members to come to order.

Mr MILLAR: I asked the Minister for Health a question yesterday. Some \$10 million was given to the Queensland Labor government for an upgrade of the emergency department in Emerald in the 2020-21 financial year. The minister said, 'I'll get back to you'; she has not got back to me. She says, 'I'll look into this. I'll look into that.' I think I might start calling the health minister 'Mirror': she will look into it but will not get back to you. There was \$10 million to upgrade the emergency department at the Emerald Hospital, but we have not had any answer. The government got the money over 12 months ago, yet we have not got an answer.

In the last budget the health minister made an announcement about upgrading regional hospitals. We thought we might finally get a hospital in Blackwater. That was 12 months ago. Planning has not even started. They are calling for tenders in the next couple of weeks. We need a hospital in Blackwater now.

One of the things I have been campaigning for in the Central Highlands is renal dialysis. There is renal dialysis in Charters Towers—I congratulate Charters Towers. There is renal dialysis in Bowen—I congratulate Bowen. Why can we not have renal dialysis in Emerald? Emerald has a population of 15,000 people, yet you cannot deliver it. During the last state election, then health minister Steven Miles made an announcement that we will have renal dialysis in Longreach. That was nearly two years ago, yet we still do not have renal dialysis in Longreach. Families are still travelling thousands of kilometres, to Townsville or Rockhampton, and having to move away from their families to receive this important care. It is renal dialysis; it is not rocket science. There were chairs put in Boulia, but there is no renal dialysis there. There are nice comfortable chairs. You will be able to watch the State of Origin in those chairs if you put up a TV, but you cannot get renal dialysis in Boulia. The Labor government is failing on health.

There are other areas where they are failing. On weekends in Emerald, if little Johnny plays Rugby League or Sally plays netball and they break a bone, they cannot get an X-ray. They just have to strap it up, take some Panadol and hope for the best. It is absolutely ridiculous.

The member for Southport and I went to Boulia and heard a tragic story. An Indigenous lady in an acute situation with a terminal illness was not getting care in Mount Isa so she jumped on a Greyhound bus and went all the way to Toowoomba to try to get care. In fact, the bus driver had to stop the bus and call an ambulance in Toowoomba to take her hospital. These were the final days of her life. She finally got Angel Flight home. I acknowledge the member for Warrego and her commitment to Angel Flight. This lady got Angel Flight back to Mount Isa so that she could live out her last days in Boulia. That is the care we are giving to regional rural people.

These people are being treated like second-class citizens. How about we step up, acknowledge we have a problem and start fixing the problem? Start putting the money back into services in regional and rural services. I ask members opposite to come out and listen to the people in Emerald, Longreach and Biloela talk about the health system, because it is failing. The health system is failing. Our doctors and our nurses are doing a great job, but we are failing them.

(Time expired)