




Speech By
Robert Skelton

MEMBER FOR NICKLIN

Record of Proceedings, 24 February 2022

ADJOURNMENT

Sunshine Coast, Aged Care

 **Mr SKELTON** (Nicklin—ALP) (6.28 pm): I rise to speak on the issue of the aged-care crisis gripping our country and our beautiful Sunshine Coast. I acknowledge the members for Kurwongbah and Thuringowa for their contribution. I first need to thank the nurses, cleaners, cooks, doctors, physios, lifestyle coordinators, administration and support staff, and volunteers. I acknowledge everyone working in our aged-care centres for their tireless efforts and endless compassion and for their consistent drive to provide the best possible care for their residents, our elderly. They are tested before every shift. They wear layers of PPE for hours to prevent the spread of this insidious disease. This is exhausting, yet they continue to show up and perform their duties. They all wear this burden on their shoulders. They have already done so much during this pandemic. I thank them.

The aged-care system was broken before the COVID pandemic. No additional funds or resources were forthcoming after the long-awaited recommendations of the aged-care royal commission. The blame for the crisis in our aged-care system lies solely at the feet of the federal LNP government. It is the federal LNP government that needs to abide by the royal commission. In many instances facilities have had to secure enough vaccines to ensure their staff and residents were fully vaccinated. They have done this on their own with the help of the state or other allied health professionals. The federal LNP government left them waiting, left them without vaccines. This federal LNP government did nothing to secure enough RATs. Again, our aged-care facilities were on their own. The state government, the wider community and the providers themselves have met the shortfalls, and I thank them for it, as everyone should.

I deplore the consistent calls to open the border and let it rip. The lack of PPE, vaccines, tests and promptly acting on the best health advice could and should be seen as gross negligence. Our aged-care system needs support. Its workers need to be properly resourced. This is an unsafe workplace with COVID running rampant throughout the sector. These underpaid professionals need our help. They thoroughly deserve it. I have raised this issue with federal members and have only heard silence. Unfortunately, their interest is in headlines and photo opportunities. We are all affected by this. We all have loved ones who have been touched in some way by this crisis. I call upon the federal government to do its job.