



Speech By  
**Samuel O'Connor**


**MEMBER FOR BONNEY**

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## **HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

### **Report, Motion to Take Note**

 **Mr O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (3.27 pm): I start by thanking my fellow committee members, our excellent committee staff and everyone who submitted to this inquiry. Disappointingly, this was mostly an exercise in politics. It was all about trying to blame the federal government for the failings in the Queensland health system. For the state government to undertake this piece of work and do all they can to make sure it does not consider Queensland Health is shameful. If there is nothing to hide with how the system is operating, why are they afraid to shine a light on it?

We have the worst ambulance ramping in the nation, and this was not considered as part of this report. Why could we not consider all of these important issues in conjunction with how they intersect with the substantial part of our healthcare system administered by the Queensland government? Some of the recommendations were reasonable—improving hospital discharge arrangements; Medicare Benefits Scheme funding for services in regional, remote and rural parts of Queensland; increasing allied healthcare services; more Commonwealth supported places for medical programs; and the other associated recommendations to try to fix some of the problems around this—but these all must be considered alongside the system managed by the Queensland government. Without that, this inquiry was a complete stitch-up.

The government has used the resources of this parliament to pre-empt and support the federal Labor campaign on health funding. Clearly, someone in the Labor Party forgot to tell their federal colleagues about these recommendations. Anthony Albanese and federal Labor do not support the first recommendation of this report: to make funding for the public hospital system fifty-fifty.

The best the Premier could say about federal Labor's position on this is that they might put it on the National Cabinet agenda—that is, fifty-fifty health funding. Speaking of Anthony Albanese a couple of days ago in this place, the Premier said, 'He might listen.' A pretty powerful call to action, is it not? He might listen! Clearly no-one sent him a copy of this report which was solely produced to attack the federal LNP just before we go to a federal election. The only thing federal Labor have announced in this space is their questionable policy of urgent care clinics, with completely inadequate funding of \$135 million nationally and criticised by key stakeholders including the Australian Medical Association.

Recommendation 38 regarding increased investment in primary health clinics and health hubs vaguely covers this but relates to both the Queensland and Australian governments—one of the few recommendations calling for action by the Queensland government—exploring partnership arrangements to increase capital investment in primary health clinics and health hubs to deal with low-acuity presentations that are currently falling on emergency departments. Even the slim policy that federal Labor has announced to deal with these issues goes nowhere near this recommendation.

Of the 40 recommendations, 36 are solely within the responsibility of the Commonwealth government. It is highly unusual for the Queensland parliament to be making recommendations on substantial issues and going so far as suggesting policy which would cost billions of dollars. The federal

government is held to account by a federal parliament—a job the Senate, in particular, does robustly. They are far better suited for these sorts of considerations and, in fact, they do hold the Commonwealth to account.

Just 14 recommendations from this report of a committee of the Queensland parliament even mention the Queensland government and they are mostly just asking for an update or better ways to collaborate. We heard the health minister say before that the federal government is abrogating its responsibilities. Like the member for Southport, I highlight submission No. 75 to this inquiry from the Australian government which pre-emptively responded to many of the recommendations. Since the federal LNP has come to government, their funding contribution to the Queensland government to manage the public hospital and healthcare system has doubled from \$2.6 billion to \$5.2 billion. That is twice the proportion the Queensland government's contribution has grown in the same time. That is on top of record increases in health, aged-care and disability funding.

Finally, it being International Nurses Day, I place on record my sincere thanks to all the nurses that I proudly represent. There are a lot of them. Healthcare workers are my biggest category of employer in the Bonney electorate. In the electorate we have the Gold Coast University Hospital, the Gold Coast Private Hospital, many other health and aged-care facilities and the amazing Griffith University School of Nursing and Midwifery, which is the No. 1 ranked university for nursing and midwifery in Australia. You are all so valuable to our community and today we thank you very much.