




Speech By
Trevor Watts

MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA NORTH

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PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENT

Darling Downs, Hospital

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (2.25 pm): I am here today to talk about getting the community of Toowoomba and the wider community of the Darling Downs to support building the new hospital in Toowoomba. It needs to be built now. This has been on the table for some time. The Deputy Premier visited in 2018 and said, 'No matter where you live in the Darling Downs region, you will have access to high quality health care.' That is what he said.

We have \$7.5 million being spent to send half-blind pensioners down to Brisbane to get their cataract operations. It is not good enough for the people of the Darling Downs and we deserve the new hospital. There is a wonderful site at Baillie Henderson. The plans are in place. The government has had the plans since 2020. Darling Downs Health gave the complete detailed business case to the government nearly two years ago. It is time to stop the delay and get on with building the hospital.

The simple facts are that it is waiting for an investment decision. You can go on Queensland Health's website and it will say, 'Waiting for an investment decision'. The person who needs to make the investment decision is the Premier. I am not sure what has changed since we had a left faction Labor health minister who said he was going to get on and build the job because it is deserved on the Darling Downs, and now we have a right faction Labor member who does not seem to have any interest at all in building this hospital in Toowoomba. It is simply not good enough.

Our mental health beds are running at basically capacity 12 months of the year. We have 402 overnight beds planned in the new hospital. That is a 27 per cent increase. If the government cannot see that we have a health crisis and we need more beds in Queensland, then the government needs to open its eyes. We are not looking for a satellite hospital in Toowoomba; we are looking for a tertiary hospital to be built on the wonderful site at Baillie Henderson that will increase our bed capacity by 27 per cent. This was a promise made by the Deputy Premier. A promise made should be a promise kept, not broken. The people of Toowoomba have been asking for this for a long time.

The current facility is 25 years old. Its life expectancy is now up. It is an inefficient building, not because of the hardworking doctors and nurses—and I should give a shout-out to the nurses on International Nurses Day—but because the equipment they need and the wards they are trying to service are scattered all over the hospital. It is completely inefficient. It is costing money. We are spending money on transporting people who do not want to leave their homes down to Brisbane to get operations. It is time for this hospital investment decision to be made by the Premier, and I call on her to do it now.

(Time expired)