




Speech By
Hon. Yvette D'Ath

MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Federal Budget, Health

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (10.28 am): If the budget delivered by the Morrison government last night is remembered at all, it will be remembered for the way it failed Queensland. Nowhere is that failure more evident than in its failure to support our health system. They failed Queenslanders with the vaccine rollout. They failed Queenslanders through their mismanagement of quarantine. They failed Queenslanders with their inability to secure sufficient rapid antigen tests. They failed Queenslanders by backing Clive Palmer over Queensland when it came to our borders. The Morrison government failed them again last night through their refusal to lift their financial support of our public hospitals and reform the national health funding agreements.

The call for a fifty-fifty split on health funding was not made by Queensland alone but by a range of stakeholders who recognise the challenges we face and the critical role the Commonwealth needs to play if we are to address the pressures of rising demand, including the AMA and every state government representing both sides of politics. Scott Morrison's response was not to simply ignore our appeal but to cut \$21 million from our hospitals this coming financial year and a \$176 million cut to Queensland hospitals over the forward estimates when compared to the MYEFO commitments. What government in the midst of a pandemic decides to cut hospital funding? A government that has contempt for the Australian people—that is who.

The arbitrary imposition of a 6.5 per cent cap on the Commonwealth's contribution by the coalition government is a real threat to the sustainability of our health system. This was also pointed out to the Morrison government forcefully and repeatedly by the states and the AMA. Last night we got our response—silence. There was no action on dental, with the same frozen amount rolled over for another year, meaning that Queenslanders are missing out on vital dental care.

While the coalition government has made additional home care packages—which were previously announced—available through this budget, the investment in aged care is nowhere near sufficient to meet demand. The vast majority of the coalition government aged-care investment is previously announced money with no new initiatives that would materially assist Queensland in tackling the significant challenges we face with bed block in our hospitals.

Finally, the coalition continues to neglect primary care and, by extension, our hospital system. We are one health system, and we need a strong primary care sector to be treating patients who might otherwise end up at our emergency departments—something we have seen an exponential increase in over the last decade. There is no substantive investment in this sector. Instead, we have symbolic line items purporting to implement the 10-year primary healthcare plan, but in reality they are more concerned with mitigating political risk, rather than enacting health system reform.

This budget was an opportunity for the federal government to reverse the corrosive impact they have had on our nation's health system since they came to power. They failed. They gave us less than the bare minimum and cut funding to our hospitals. This is a betrayal that Queenslanders will never forget. I support the AMA's comment that hopefully the next government will do better.