



Speech By  
**Hon. Yvette D'Ath**

**MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE**

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## **APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL**

### **APPROPRIATION BILL**

#### **Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)**

#### **Appropriation Bill**

#### **Health and Environment Committee, Report**

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (11.33 am): I want to follow on from the member for Southport's contribution. He spent half the time just reading my opening statement. On population growth, two things: firstly, maybe the LNP when they were in government should have looked at population growth and actually planned some new hospitals and redevelopments; secondly, population growth is not the only thing causing pressure on our health system. In fact, it is lack of access to GPs, it is millions of people dropping out of the private health system, it is aged care and disability services failing people who are stuck in hospitals, and it is a global health crisis. But that is okay, I am used to the LNP being very selective in what they quote.

I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Health and Environment Committee's report into the recent estimates hearings and, in doing so, I thank the chair, the committee, the secretariat, parliamentary staff and Hansard for their attendance and efforts to ensure the smooth running of the 2022 estimates hearings.

In preparing this statement, I had a glance at the one I made this time last year and I have to say most of it is as relevant today as it was then. Our lives are still being influenced by COVID-19. Our health system is still under strain because of it, even if those opposite do not wish to acknowledge the demands it puts on the health system. We have just heard that again now.

Our amazing health workers are still turning up day and night, providing world-class health care to Queensland. We cannot thank them enough for their ongoing dedication, and I want them to know the Palaszczuk government has their back. Since 2015, we have hired an extra 3,106 doctors, 10,637 nurses and midwives, 5,077 allied health professionals, and 1,103 ambulance officers. We will be hiring more than 9,475 more health workers this term of government, including 770 local graduate nurses to combat workforce pressures being led across the planet.

I note the comments of the opposition in the statement of reservation and would like to point out that the only time FTEs in Queensland Health have decreased in this state occurred under an LNP government.

Just two months ago, we announced a record health budget—\$23.6 billion. That is more than \$4,500 per person in Queensland. At the core of the Queensland Health and Hospitals Plan is a commitment to fund three new hospitals, build a cancer centre and upgrade and expand current

hospitals. Here is a list, and by no means is it an exhaustive list, of where we are getting to work: Cairns, Townsville, Mackay, Bundaberg, Hervey Bay, Ipswich, Logan, Toowoomba, Redcliffe, four locations in Brisbane, Coomera and Robina. We are going to need them because with an ever increasing and ageing population, pressure on our hospitals and health professionals will intensify, but our plan means we are prepared and up to the job.

Just look at the latest performance figures for proof. As we stared down our third COVID wave this year, with around five per cent of our staff furloughed at any time, hundreds of beds taken up by patients waiting for aged-care places and shortage of GPs, our emergency departments managed to see all category 1 patients in the recommended time frame. That is 100 per cent seen on time. The median wait time for the 575,000 people who attended EDs was 17 minutes and, despite facing an Omicron wave, elective surgery went up 39 per cent from the previous quarter.

Our Ambulance Service has performed admirably. Those opposite like to claim, incorrectly I might add, that we have the worst ramping in the country. Let me be very clear, and to clear this up once and for all, while it is not always appropriate to compare the data from different jurisdictions because each has a different reporting method, we can compare Queensland to Western Australia and Victoria, which I tried to do at estimates and, despite the claims of those opposite for months that we were the worst in the country, when I tried to give them actual comparison figures, they said, 'Oh, you can't measure that; it is not apples with apples.' So, for the first time, suddenly we cannot compare. Yes, we can. Here are the facts: 55 per cent of Queensland patients were off stretcher within 30 minutes. In Western Australia, transfer of care within 30 minutes was 35.1 per cent. Transfer of care is actually shorter than off-stretcher. If we use the same methodology as Victoria where they calculate patient off-stretcher time within 40 minutes, we would have a post rate of 70.38 per cent, which is almost seven per cent better than Victoria.

It would be great if the members for Broadwater and Mudgeeraba could stop misleading the House and the good people of Queensland. Our health workers deserve so much more than the LNP who, when last in power, sacked 4,400 health workers, including 1,800 nurses. A heartfelt thankyou to all of our dedicated Queensland Health staff and the Queensland Ambulance staff for their continued hard work.