



Speech By
Bart Mellish

MEMBER FOR ASPLEY

Record of Proceedings, 11 October 2023

MOTION

Liberal National Party, Health

 **Mr MELLISH** (Aspley—ALP) (2.42 pm): It gives me great pleasure to speak on this motion about the substantial risk that the LNP pose to health care on the north side of Brisbane and, indeed, across the state. If we want to know what the LNP would do to health care in our part of town then past behaviour is the best predictor of future behaviour. What was their track record within the Metro North health district? They sacked over 1,400 staff, which was the largest sacking in any of the health and hospital service areas, including over 730 nurses. I remember when I was doorknocking in Geebung in 2017. I came across an ex-nurse who had been sacked by the Newman government and had not worked since. He was in a bad way because, through no fault of his own, he had been told by the LNP that his state no longer needed him and that his community did not need his skills. The way they treated staff was shocking and it was worst in health.

The LNP closed the Barrett Adolescent Centre without replacement, even though their own expert committee recommended they keep it open. In 2020 I was very pleased to see the opening of its replacement. We built Jacaranda Place, which is located next to Prince Charles Hospital in the electorate of Stafford. When I was last there I spoke with some teenagers who told me how grateful they were that they had somewhere to go when they were doing it really tough.

As a north-side member I am proud that since 2015 we have boosted our Metro North HHS by an additional 3,800 staff, including over 600 doctors and more than 2,000 nurses. Prince Charles Hospital is set to undergo a \$360 million expansion project that will see our local hospital receive a new dedicated acute services building, an expanded adult and paediatric emergency department and 94 new additional beds. That is an outstanding commitment.

What would the LNP do if they were in power? It was very concerning to hear the LNP shadow health minister, the person who wants to be health minister, say that the Newman government's record on health is something they aspire to. What a terrible record to aspire to. Maybe the shadow health minister has an amazing track record as a minister and we can take her word for it that she would be a good minister for health. I had a look and, frankly, it is a bit frightening.

The member for Mudgeeraba got off to a bad start. People may remember that within weeks of taking office, in what was seen as one of the first of many bad decisions by the Newman government, they scrapped the Premier's Literary Awards. They created weeks of bad press to save \$250,000. Then there was the plagiarised speech episode, which she casually blamed on a public servant, made them take the blame and then sacked them. Then there was the Ethics Committee investigation, the director-general of Transport scandal, the nepotism issues and issues with the lobbyist register. She even frogmarched her own chief of staff, under escort, from the executive building to try to save her own skin.

When I was looking this up, I thought I was looking at the scandals of half a dozen ministers over five or six years, not the scandals of one minister over less than a year. However, all good things come to an end. The member was too much for even Campbell Newman, who rejected her as a minister and she duly resigned. In the spirit of a John West canned tuna ad, how bad do you have to be to be rejected by Campbell Newman? That is who aspires to be their health minister.