



Speech By  
**Brittany Lauga**


**MEMBER FOR KEPPEL**

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Record of Proceedings, 13 September 2023

**MOTION**

**Hospital, Performance**

 **Ms LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (5.26 pm): I rise to speak in favour of the amendment moved by the Minister for Health. I am proud to serve as the Assistant Minister for Health and Regional Health Infrastructure under the Palaszczuk government. We are committed to boosting performance in our health system, and part of that is delivering the infrastructure and workforce numbers that our growing state needs. As part of our Big Build, we have a plan to deliver almost 3,500 new hospital beds over the next six years. We are building three new hospitals, 11 hospital expansions and seven satellite hospitals. These investments are targeted at boosting capacity in our hospitals and reducing wait times for Queenslanders, no matter where in our big state they live.

Just a few of the projects that I am most excited about include a brand new Bundaberg Hospital, a brand new Toowoomba Hospital and expansions at the Cairns, Mackay and Townsville hospitals. It is great news that these expansions are being funded by the Palaszczuk government's progressive coal royalties, which those opposite have refused to support time and time again. The LNP has not and will not support progressive coal royalties. So, my question for those opposite is: what projects will they cut if they are elected? Will it be the new Moranbah Hospital in the electorate of Burdekin? Well, we know that the member for Burdekin thinks that health workers are paid too much, so will he take an axe to Moranbah's new hospital too? Or will it be the Townsville University Hospital, delivering 143 new beds?

**Mr LAST:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Order, members! I will take the point of order in silence.

**Mr LAST:** I take personal offence at the comments of the member for Keppel and ask that they be withdrawn.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member has taken personal offence. I ask you to withdraw.

**Ms LAUGA:** I withdraw. Or will it be the new Toowoomba Hospital, which provides high-quality services to people across the Darling Downs? If those opposite do not support this government's progressive coal royalties, they do not support these projects.

We are not just investing in infrastructure with our progressive coal royalties. I am proud that this year's budget included a more than \$70 million boost to the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme so regional Queenslanders can access highly specialised care when they need it. Queensland is the most decentralised state in Australia, and our No. 1 priority is increasing services so regional Queenslanders can access treatment closer to home. Unfortunately, some people will need to travel away from home to access specialist services that are not available in their community.

I was proud to work with a number of my regional colleagues on this side of the House to fight for an increase to the subsidy scheme. This boost will mean that Queenslanders who need to travel for health care will be able to do so. So, will the LNP cut this scheme if they are elected next year? Will the members for Warrego, Callide, Southern Downs and Gregory return to their communities this week and tell them that they want to have less access to health care?

**Mr Lister:** I will tell them I haven't got a dam yet. What are you doing about that?

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Member for Southern Downs, I never cease to be impressed at the level of debate you can bring the Emu Swamp Dam into, but nonetheless you are warned.

**Ms LAUGA:** I would ask the member for Southern Downs if he is going to return to his community this week and say that he does not support progressive coal royalties and therefore does not support the increase to the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme. People in his community use the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme in order to access specialist health care in South-East Queensland and further afield. This is a really critical subsidy scheme for people in regional Queensland. The boost of more than \$70 million is funded through progressive coal royalties. Does the member for Southern Downs believe that the boost should not be funded or that progressive coal royalties should not be part of this government's budget, thereby increasing the boost to the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme? I would ask the member for Southern Downs whether he is going to be clear with his community about exactly where he stands.

We recently announced that we will deliver a \$92 million refurbishment and expansion of the Rockhampton mental health facility. The new mental health facility will ensure Rockhampton and surrounding areas have access to more beds and the vital support services they require close to home. We know that regional areas are particularly vulnerable to mental health challenges, and by increasing our commitment to services in Rocky we can ensure this community has access to the support and services they expect and deserve. Deputy Speaker, you will never guess how we are paying for it: progressive coal royalties. If the LNP are elected next year will they cut this project? We know they have a record of cutting mental health services and funding. They are the only government in Queensland's history to cut mental health services. There is too much at stake to risk the LNP next year. We know their record on health care: 4,400 healthcare workers sacked, including 197 in Central Queensland and not a single new hospital. We know they will do it again. Today we revealed their plan to cut the wages and conditions of health workers and they revealed their \$10 billion infrastructure hit list. I commend the motion amended by the minister to the House.