




Speech By
Bryson Head

MEMBER FOR CALLIDE

Record of Proceedings, 22 February 2023

MOTION: QUEENSLAND HEALTH

 **Mr HEAD** (Callide—LNP) (5.08 pm): What an absolute disgrace! We give the Palaszczuk government an opportunity to stand up and show Queenslanders that they are listening, that they are serious about fixing the health crisis. Instead, the health minister comes in here and continues to play politics while mothers continue to run the risk of giving birth along our major highways; while a grandma, an uncle or a child sits at the top of a hospital ramp in the back of an ambulance unable to be admitted to hospital because the failures of this health minister and this Premier mean the emergency department is full. I fully support this motion as moved by the member for Mudgeraba.

I know that the constituents of Callide and people all across Queensland support this, too. The member for Mudgeraba has worked with the LNP team and, in total, we have run 28 health crisis town hall meetings. This motion comes from having listened to the thousands of brave Queenslanders who have shared their stories.

Labor likes talking about their record on health and, judging by the health minister's comments, they seem to think everything is roses. They must be governing a different Queensland to the one I live in. The Satellite Hospitals Program was meant to cost \$280 million. We all like talking in layman's terms here so, for those who cannot imagine how much money that is, just imagine 1.3 Wellcamps. Now, well before they are even finished, they are expected to cost nearly \$400 million, which gets you just shy of two Wellcamps—a whopping \$110 million over budget. Guess what: they are not even real hospitals. They do not have overnight beds. This is the incredibly low standard of the Palaszczuk Labor government.

On 9 November last year I spoke in this House about one brave mother who gave birth to little Matilda on the Bruce Highway. That is right: she has 'Bruce Highway' on her birth certificate. I wish I could say that she was the only baby I have met with 'highway' on her birth certificate, but I have also met baby Beatrix—yet another baby who has 'highway' on her birth certificate because of the failures of this government. This is the reality that the people of rural and regional Queensland continue to face.

While our shadow health minister travels the state listening to all of these horrendous stories, Premier Palaszczuk continues to defend the worst health minister Queensland has ever seen. At least when the Treasurer and the Deputy Premier were health ministers they could publicly commit to birthing services in the bush. The now Deputy Premier even said, 'Queensland is one of the safest places in the world to give birth.' Well, not if you live north of Gympie and west of Toowoomba, thanks to this Premier and this health minister.

To this day, Callide remains without a single active maternity ward across 14 hospitals. Gladstone, my next closest hospital, which should have a maternity ward, remains on bypass—now for a total of 229 days. What has the member for Gladstone been doing about this? He certainly has said a lot of things but what has he actually done? On 18 July he said, 'Every day I am in communication with the health minister's office, the CQHHS CEO and board members.' It has been 219 days since that comment. You would think that a government minister would only make such a comment if they could back it up.

From June last year through to mid-November—over more than 130 days—have a guess how many times the member for Gladstone sent communications to the CQHHS about maternity. Seven. Seven times out of 130 days is a fair stretch from ‘every day’. He also said that he had been in touch with the health minister’s office, but guess what: even though we received the CQHSS request for information months ago, the one submitted to the health minister keeps getting delayed. I wonder why. It appears that the member for Gladstone has completely lied to his electorate and made out that he is doing something he is not. I wish that was not the case, but we know it is the cold, hard truth. He is certainly welcome to show his constituents otherwise. This Palaszczuk government is rotten to the core and is more worried about how things look than how they are, so I will not be holding my breath.

We know that this issue runs a lot deeper than across Callide and impacts people from all across rural and regional Queensland. The member for Gregory still does not have renal dialysis in Longreach, even though it was promised more than two years ago. If the health minister is serious about fixing these issues, she will answer every question posed in the original motion.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Member for Callide, you used some unparliamentary language in that contribution. I would ask that you withdraw.

Mr HEAD: I withdraw.