




Speech By
Linus Power

MEMBER FOR LOGAN

Record of Proceedings, 24 August 2023

ADJOURNMENT

Federal Labor Government, Bulk-Billing

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (6.24 pm): As we well know, under the Morrison LNP government we saw more and more GPs step away from bulk-billing. The effective cuts to Medicare payments by the LNP made it harder and harder. This had a significant effect on locals in Logan. Locals in Hillcrest, Park Ridge, Boronia Heights and right through Browns Plains—the member for Woodridge is here with me—had to pay more. They were sometimes put off going to the doctor altogether which meant that they got sicker. We know that the LNP cuts had a real effect on the Queensland hospital system—

Mr Stevens interjected.

Mr POWER: That is right. This is what some think. It added to the pressure on our hospitals and made what could have been a simple GP treatment into a multiday stay in a hospital. That is why I am so pleased that the new Anthony Albanese Labor government is taking this problem seriously. Locally, Jim Chalmers knows that and he is investing in the Browns Plains Medicare Urgent Care Clinic. After nine long years of LNP neglect Jim and Albo tripled the bulk-billing rate. That is the biggest increase in 40 years. It is going to help bring back bulk-billing. Even better, they are investing in the local Browns Plains Medicare Urgent Care Clinic. The urgent care clinic bulk bills, but it also has expanded services—including X-ray—extended hours seven days a week and has highly trained doctors, some of whom I have met. There is no need for an appointment. It will help support our hospital system.

At Logan Hospital there is investment in over 206 new beds, upgraded maternity services, four new floors and a modular ward. There was no investment in Logan Hospital from the LNP government. Now we have a real partnership with a new government that cares about increasing bulk-billing rates because they know it takes the pressure off emergency departments. They are putting money into the urgent care clinics. They are partnering with us in investing in the Logan Hospital.

On a personal note, when Jack broke his arm at the Park Ridge soccer club—and we were not certain his arm was broken, but we knew he was in pain—we had to take him to Logan Hospital where the service, frankly, was exemplary. They were fantastic. This urgent care clinic would have provided us and other families like mine in the local Browns Plains area with a choice. Jack and I could have gone to the urgent care clinic and received all of the treatment he needed, including X-rays and setting. That would have made a tremendous difference and we would not have had to put any pressure on the Logan emergency department.