




Speech By
Hon. Shannon Fentiman

MEMBER FOR WATERFORD

Record of Proceedings, 13 September 2023

MOTION

Health Workers

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women) (4.02 pm): I move—

That this House:

1. supports and thanks Queensland's hardworking frontline health workers for the care they provide our community
2. condemns the LNP's plan to slash the pay and conditions of Queensland's hardworking health workers
3. condemns the member for Burnett's public comments attacking the pay and conditions of health workers, where he stated 'it's time we broke the back of unrealistic employee entitlements'
4. condemns the member for Mudgeeraba's refusal to apologise—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Members, I generally find that if we are going to have a debate, it is good to listen to the motion. I am having trouble hearing it. I am sure Hansard is as well. I will start warning people. I call the minister to continue reading the motion.

Ms FENTIMAN: I continue—

4. condemns the member for Mudgeeraba's refusal to apologise for labelling Queensland Health staff in regional Queensland as 'duds'

Mr O'Connor interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Bonney is warned.

Ms FENTIMAN: And—

5. notes the savage cuts inflicted on Queensland's health system by the Newman LNP government and member for Broadwater, including;
 - (a) sacking more than 4,400 health workers, including 1,800 nurses and midwives
 - (b) cutting \$1.6 billion from the Queensland Health budget
 - (c) closing hospital beds across Queensland
 - (d) removing \$120 million in funding to Queensland Health community organisations
 - (e) closing the Barrett Adolescent Centre
 - (f) crippling the public hospital system by trying to force unreasonable working conditions on doctors.

Mr POWELL: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I believe that there are a number of statements made by the member for Waterford in that motion where she is deliberately misleading the House, and I will be writing to you to refer those matters for consideration.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! It is not a point of order. You can take action in relation to allegations of misleading the House.

Ms FENTIMAN: If Queenslanders ever needed a reminder of the values and the views that those opposite hold about our frontline health workers, the member for Burnett let it slip late on a Monday night on his social media, arguing with constituents, grandmothers in his community. Let's not forget that he said 'it's time we broke the back of unrealistic employee entitlements'. This is the pay and conditions of our nurses, our midwives and our doctors. It is the pay they take home while they are hard at work looking after us, away from their own families. It is their annual leave. It is their leave to have young children, their parental leave. It is their sick leave because God knows occasionally our health workers get sick looking after us. It is absolutely outrageous that the member for Burnett can get away with saying 'it's time we broke the back of unrealistic employee entitlements'.

Today the Leader of the Opposition absolutely must stand up and apologise—stand up and apologise to the nurses and doctors in Wide Bay. In fact, all of the health workers in this state deserve an apology, but I will not hold my breath on an apology from the Leader of the Opposition. He still has not apologised for sacking so many thousands of health workers when he sat around the cabinet table with his mentor, Campbell Newman. He still has not apologised.

Secondly, the Leader of the Opposition today must absolutely condemn the member for Burnett's comments and rule out—come on, today—absolutely rule out slashing their pay and conditions. I am sorry, the member for Broadwater today said he was 'disappointed'. I think he was disappointed the member for Burnett let the plan slip before the election. That is what he was disappointed about. It is absolutely necessary for the Leader of the Opposition to rule it out today.

Thirdly, the member for Broadwater should absolutely stand aside the member for Burnett as an assistant minister. It is absolutely outrageous that the member for Broadwater's hand-picked shadow assistant minister—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, members!

Ms FENTIMAN: But it is not just the member for Burnett clearly who holds these views. It is absolutely every single one of them. It is the member for Broadwater, it is the member for Kawana and, don't worry, member for Mudgeeraba, we all remember how you called our regional health workers duds and absolutely will not apologise. We absolutely know that their values and their views about our healthcare workers is that there are too many of them and they are overpaid, because that is what they did the last time they were in government, and it is the secret plan they have now if they are elected. We know they do not support our mental health levy. They will cut absolutely our satellite hospitals, and they will cut the pay and conditions of our frontline health workers.

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Now having read the motion, I bring to your attention item 2 of the motion. I would ask you, Mr Deputy Speaker, to have the minister to authenticate the claim because the Leader of the Opposition has done a press conference after question time today, the shadow minister for health has issued a statement clearly saying what the minister has said and put out in a statement was misleading and incorrect, and the motion condemns the LNP's plan which has been categorically denied by the Leader of the Opposition. As you have ruled on many occasions about authentication, if the minister cannot authenticate an LNP policy on that, I would ask the motion to be ruled out of order, or at least that provision of the motion.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will take some advice in silence. Minister, are you able to authenticate the facts in relation to the second point of your motion?

Ms FENTIMAN: Point 2 condemns the LNP's plan to slash pay and conditions. I tabled earlier today during question time, a Facebook post—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I would like to hear the minister's response.

Ms FENTIMAN:—which clearly outlines a shadow assistant minister from the LNP who says health workers are getting overpaid. I would ask the opposition to have a look at the Facebook post that I tabled. It was even laminated to make it nice and easy for them.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, minister. To the facts, please. I ask the House—

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, I am going to take some advice. I ask the House to maintain decorum while I do that.

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. There is a precedent for this and, in fact, you may have been in the chair. I asked a question in question time about a statement the Olympics CEO had raised. A clarifying statement had been issued since that announcement and then I was asked to change my question based on the statement that had been issued by the CEO of Olympics Australia, A statement has now been issued by the shadow health minister and made publicly by the Leader of the Opposition and that gets to my point on the first point.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you for that. We will take that into consideration. Members, we will continue with the debate. However, I would ask both the minister and the member for Kawana as the person rising on the point of order to provide information to the Speaker that supports your various views. Then we will reserve our decision in relation to this matter.