




Speech By
Amanda Camm

MEMBER FOR WHITSUNDAY

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MOTION

General Practitioners

 **Ms CAMM** (Whitsunday—LNP) (5.42 pm): Bulk-billing rates are declining across Queensland and have been for a number of years but no more so than in regional Queensland and across the electorate that I represent. There are no fully bulk-billed medical practices in the greater Mackay region anymore and this tax by stealth that is going to impact general practice is another example of this Treasurer's arrogance—no consultation, not listening to industry, little regard for Queenslanders and especially Queenslanders who live in rural and regional Queensland.

I heard the member for Ipswich outline comments made by RACGP President, Dr Nicole Higgins. I am proud to say that Dr Nicole Higgins is my local constituent. Her practice is in the Whitsunday region and I get to speak to Dr Nicole Higgins quite regularly and at times quite informally down at our local Bucasia beachfront cafe. I will quote Dr Nicole Higgins, who said—

It is another nail in the coffin for struggling general practices in Queensland.

Practices with two or more full time equivalent GPs will be affected. So, it's particularly bad news for rural and remote communities, which are often served by small practices with only a few ... hard-working GPs.

No-one knows this more than the member for Burdekin given that there are parts of his community that have only had one or two GPs who have been crippled under this state Labor government and there are communities that do not even have access to a GP anymore because of the failures of this Labor government. The Vice-President and Queensland Chair, Dr Bruce Willett, went on to say that this tax 'will have a devastating impact on communities across Queensland and will result in worsening health conditions, and more strain on our already overburdened hospital system and emergency departments'.

As outlined by our shadow health minister, we know that EDs are at capacity. Ambulance ramping at 44.7 per cent is the worst in the country and in Mackay since 2015 when this government came to power and the local member's time began in this House the elective surgery waitlist has soared by 885 to 1,702. That is a 108 per cent increase, yet this government wants to inflict more pain and hardship on general practice which is going to be a deterrent for people accessing that primary health care that we know they desperately need.

I have had the pleasure to meet with many practice managers across my community of Mackay and the Whitsundays. I have hosted the shadow Treasurer to meet with general practice managers across the community, and many general practice managers are not doctors. In fact, I represent an electorate where they are single businesswomen running GP practices. I refer to Kath, who I reached out to through my office this morning. She is a practice manager who held a staff meeting this very day advising that patients are not going to be happy and that it is going to cause enormous frustration.

Just in the last 12 months the rising cost impost on business when you add up electricity, goods and services, freight and transport under this current government equate to an increase of over 20 per cent. They are already under enormous pressure in terms of the need to increase fees and charges that they do not want to pass on to their patients. Under this government and under this Treasurer, further taxation and further costs are going to put these small businesses at risk.

We know that our hardworking staff across our frontline services in our hospitals and in particular my local hospital at the Mackay Base Hospital are already under strain from the lack of support and the lack of resources by this government and this government failing to listen to those on the front line. Have we ever heard advocacy by those opposite? No! All we have heard is crickets. I would like to know if the Treasurer and how many government members have met with GPs and practice managers since the introduction and how many of them are applauding this government. If we want to end the chaos and crisis of this Labor government, then I urge anyone who sees a GP and wants to make sure they can afford to see a GP to change the government and show Labor the door in '24.

(Time expired)