



Speech By
Christopher Whiting

MEMBER FOR BANCROFT

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HEALTH AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (NO. 2)

Mr WHITING (Bancroft—ALP) (4.42 pm): I am happy to stand to resume debate on the bill—

A government member: In its entirety.

Mr WHITING:—in its entirety, as it should be passed for the betterment of every living Queenslanders. I rise to support the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2), in contrast with all of those opposite. I note that the member for Southern Downs said that it was one of the worst bills he had ever seen, and this is a bill that delivers better health care to all Queenslanders. I note that the LNP members speaking on this bill have shown an unwillingness to trust the hardworking healthcare workers of Queensland and in my area of Metro North. For example, the member for Callide complained about a potential lack of health system workers and the member for Southern Downs has shown a lack of faith in his local healthcare workers to perform their jobs. I find that quite astounding from a side that sacked 14,000 workers, including 4,400 healthcare workers and 1,800 nurses.

It is very clear that the LNP does not trust nurses and midwives in Queensland Health to be involved in prescribing or administering medicines such as MS-2 Step. It does not want to back them through nurse-to-patient ratios. In contrast, I want to express my support for the health workers in Queensland Health—the same workers who will never be supported or trusted by the LNP. I know that in my electorate everyone supports our local healthcare workers in the Metro North area. I want to relay a story about the quality of the workers who are not backed by the LNP. Di Pollard and Peter Hackett from Deception Bay said—

Yesterday morning, my husband suffered a massive heart attack at home ... I rang 000 and within a minute was giving his details to a lovely lady who stayed on the line with me until the ambulance arrived at our address.

We live at the Western end of Deception Bay. The ambulance was coming from a job in Dakabin and arrived within minutes under lights and sirens. Two young men from Queensland Ambulance Service handled the situation calmly and professionally and within minutes had my husband on a gurney and were loading him into the ambulance.

A further 'rapid response' ambulance arrived and one of the crew went into the larger ambulance for the journey to The Prince Charles Hospital.

They apparently called ahead and a cardiac team was prepared for my husband's arrival ... hubby was in the Coronary Care Unit coming round from surgery to position a stent in his blocked artery. From the initial call to 000 to finding him in recovery was less than two hours.

The news is filled with stories about ambulance wait times, ambulance ramping at hospitals and hospital waiting lists and poor care BUT ... Peter and I can't thank the emergency operator, ambulance officers and the teams at The Prince Charles Hospital enough for their care and the calm and professional way they handled the situation.

They are the kinds of stories about our healthcare workers that we never hear from the LNP because it does not back our healthcare workers. It will never back our workers who administer the medicines needed for reproductive health, the workers who look after the people experiencing heart conditions and the workers who look after babies under our nurse-to-patient ratios.

I want to briefly talk about clause 12—the midwife-to-patient ratios. It is true, as the Treasurer said before, that members of the LNP have always opposed nurse-to-patient ratios. They thought it was a hasty attempt to placate the nurses union—and LNP members spoke about that very thing in this place—but now they are trying to paint themselves as champions of nurse-to-patient ratios. Queenslanders know that nurse-to-patient ratios really do matter and they cannot trust the LNP to stick with them. Its cuts will mean cuts to nurse-to-patient ratios.

The member for Toowoomba North quoted from the Cherish Life email we have probably all seen about opposition to one particular clause, and it is clear that members opposite will heed the call by Cherish Life and will vote as directed by it. I find that quite telling. We have known for a long time that the LNP has been largely captured by groups that do not reflect mainstream Queensland and it is not even pretending to listen to Queensland women anymore. All members opposite can hear are the voices stacking their local branches threatening their preselections. I hope that some of the same members who crossed the floor last time may cross the floor this time, but I doubt it.

I want to support the establishment of a national occupational respiratory illness disease registry and want to emphasise the dangers of lung diseases like asbestos. It is estimated that some 4,000 Australians each year die from exposure to asbestos—double the annual national road toll. A lot of these people did nothing more than turn up to work to make a living or simply washed the clothes of family members who worked with asbestos. Asbestos is in homes built before 1990. It is in one in three homes and there is no safe level of exposure to asbestos fibres, which are 200 times smaller than a human hair. While I am on my feet I want to commend the work of the Asbestos Disease Support Society, which does great work in Queensland and reminds us that asbestos related diseases are not a thing of the past.

The Miles Labor government has listened to the staff and patients who say that midwife ratios make them safer, and it is great to see that we are delivering them. We know that the LNP opposes midwife ratios and would repeal them if it got into power, and that is only one more reason you cannot trust the LNP to run Queensland. I commend the bill to the House.