




Speech By
Christopher Whiting

MEMBER FOR BANCROFT

Record of Proceedings, 11 September 2024

MOTION

General Practitioners

 **Mr WHITING** (Bancroft—ALP) (5.37 pm): Following the member for Toowoomba South, I will say one thing: good governments do not sack 4,400 health workers when they come to office. They do not sack 1,800 nurses. He should bear that in mind. That is not what good governments do.

The Treasurer asked why the member for Toowoomba South did not move this motion, and I think we have the answer. All he can deliver here is story time, a Dr Seuss lecture on what he believes is happening. I will say that I was hoping to follow an actual doctor in this debate, the member for Moggill; that would have been good. My question is: why is he not talking on this? He is a former president of the AMA. I am wondering why they might be hiding him in this debate. I will let them decide what they will do after this.

It is very clear that the LNP are very confused about what they want with this motion. As we have heard, if it was implemented doctors would pay payroll tax and the public ruling that the member for Nanango seeks to revoke is the ruling that allows medical practitioners to avoid paying payroll tax. This motion is based on a tax that does not exist. If the LNP motion were implemented, our hardworking GPs would end up paying more tax. It is ludicrous. The LNP are clearly confused with this motion. They are struggling to nominate what they actually mean or think is a tax, and it had to be pointed out to them that what they are talking about is a Revenue Office ruling.

If we did accept the confused arguments of those opposite, does a cut equal a tax? Are taxes as defined by the LNP equivalent to a cut, because the LNP knows all about cuts to health services? Let me remind those opposite. The member for Maryborough reminded me that those opposite cut pathology services at the Maryborough Hospital and we had to restore them when we got back into government. It was the only accident and emergency department on the east coast of Australia without a pathology unit and had to be downgraded, and that was in the region of Wide Bay where they sacked 345 healthcare workers, including 120 nurses. Some of the nurses that they sacked at that time were living in tents because of the floods that had happened in Bundaberg. Imagine delivering a sacking notice to a nurse who is living in a tent. This is the record of the LNP on health—cuts.

If we accept the confused definitions of those opposite, it would probably be equivalent to a tax. Who knows what they are getting at? Let me also remind those opposite that they closed the Barrett Adolescent Centre. Not only that, they cut the annual funding for 153 healthcare projects run by NGOs including \$760,000 to the Flying Doctor. That is absolutely disgraceful. While talking about LNP cuts, let us not forget about the Morrison government as well. I do believe it delivered a 30 per cent cut to the National Partnership Agreement on Public Dental Services.

As I said, the LNP is clearly confused with this motion because these revenue arrangements have not changed. The Queensland Revenue Office advises that the contractor provisions in the Payroll Tax Act have been in place in their current form since 2008, and we heard the Treasurer talk about that as well. The Queensland Revenue Office advises that there has been no change—no change—on how it administers the provisions in relation to businesses that run medical practices.

In September 2023, we announced the decision to support GPs to come into compliance with payroll tax through the payroll tax amnesty and we have provided this amnesty at a cost to the budget of \$100 million a year. This means that medical practices are subject to the same payroll tax interpretations today as they were during the entirety of the Newman government. The LNP is very confused with this motion, and I cannot blame it. It is probably a bit much for those opposite to try to get their heads around revenue measures and around taxation policy. They have promised to bring in one, but they do not have one.

(Time expired)