



Speech By
James Martin

MEMBER FOR STRETTON

Record of Proceedings, 20 August 2024


APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation Bill

Health, Environment and Agriculture Committee, Report

 **Mr MARTIN** (Stretton—ALP) (7.30 pm): I rise to speak about the Health, Environment and Agriculture Committee estimates hearing. It was great to hear from ministers about the new Miles Labor government's achievements. Firstly, in health, Queensland has seen record spending under the Miles government. Unlike those opposite, who only want to cut, sack and sell, we are committed to investing in our healthcare system. That is why we have built seven state-of-the-art satellite hospitals around Queensland, including one in my local area at Eight Mile Plains, to provide urgent care closer to home.

We heard they are taking pressure off our emergency departments at QEII and Logan Hospital by providing free walk-in care for non-life-threatening conditions such as fractures, infections, minor burns and head injuries. Already, we have seen hundreds of thousands of patients throughout Queensland at these satellite hospitals for things like dialysis, cancer therapy, allied services and mental health services. It is something that has been very popular with the community.

We also heard about the expanded Logan Hospital program, which is delivering hundreds of additional beds, more operating theatres, more surgical theatres and more procedure rooms. I have been lucky enough to tour those new wards and beds with our fantastic staff from QEII Hospital and Logan Hospital, and I know how much of a difference they will make to the lives of people in my local area.

Since 2020, we have hired an extra 11,180 frontline staff. That is in stark contrast to the LNP, who sacked 4,400 health workers when they were last in government. Unlike those opposite, who look to belittle and scorn our healthcare heroes, we stand up for our frontline workers. It was disappointing that, during the estimates process, we heard the shadow minister for health saying health workers were underperforming. This is the same shadow minister who referred to health workers as duds. We have heard members opposite say that public servants have nothing to fear if they are elected. Health workers need only listen to the words of the shadow minister for health—someone who thinks you are a dud or an underperformer—to know what you have to fear. It does not take much to go a little bit further and say that you will be looking at cuts, sackings and mass redundancies, just like when they were in government last time.

In contrast, the Miles Labor government is committed to our hardworking Queensland Health and Queensland Ambulance Service staff. We have a record health budget of \$28 billion. It is designed to direct our resources towards the most critical areas of need, and that includes \$130 million for 268 new ambulance staff to support the busiest ambulance service in the country. Queensland has the busiest and the best ambulance service on the mainland, and it is the only one on the mainland whose service is free. It is the opinion of those on this side of the House that that ambulance service should remain free. That should not change. That is something that might be up for grabs if those opposite are elected in October.

A key part of the Miles government's investment is the \$1.73 billion in the Queensland Cancer Strategy, which will revolutionise and strengthen cancer care for the thousands of Queenslanders who are diagnosed each year. It will make coordinating appointments and treatments much easier and allow people to take ownership of the supports they want to use.

The Miles government is doing what matters for Queenslanders and will always back our hardworking frontline health workers. I thank each and every one of our amazing healthcare staff for the hard work that they put in to keeping Queenslanders and people in my community healthy and safe. Personally, as the member for Stretton, I do not think health workers are duds and I do not think they are underperforming. I think they are doing a fantastic job at QEII, Logan and Eight Mile Plains, and so do all members on this side of the House.

In relation to the environment, Queensland's natural environment is one of our major assets, and this government is committed to protecting it. It was great to hear that we are developing enhanced protections for the ecologically, culturally and economically significant Lake Eyre Basin. It was great to hear that achievement from the Minister for the Environment. It is something that members on this side of the House are very proud of because it is a vital part of Australia's largest drainage system.