




Speech By
Jessica Pugh

MEMBER FOR MOUNT OMMANEY

Record of Proceedings, 11 September 2024

MOTION

General Practitioners

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (5.58 pm): I rise tonight to speak in favour of our fantastic community GPs who have done a great job advocating for clarification on this provision. I was so proud to advocate as a government member to the Treasurer on clarifying the provisions of the payroll tax for GPs after meeting with my own fantastic local GP, Aaron Chambers, who is now my husband's GP and owns my local community medical practice, Growlife Medical. He is a GP who also owns his own practice. He now has a number of practices within my community which I think is fantastic because, as we all know, GPs who own their own practices really strive for wonderful patient centred care.

As I was saying, I met with Aaron a few years ago so that he could explain to me how the changes in enforcement could impact on general practice and general practitioners. It is important to be clear that the rules on this issue have been in place in their current form since 2008. Aaron explained to me that many GP practices do not operate like normal small businesses. In many cases, the money paid for appointments with a GP often go to that GP directly and then the GP has a contractual arrangement with their practice whereby there is an agreed percentage that they then pay back to the practice to cover the costs of rent, incidental bandages, admin staff who take the phone calls and book appointments and, of course, the medical software that so many practices now use.

I took this information forward in my role as a community advocate and local member. I explained why I felt we need to give GPs an opportunity to not be subject to the payroll tax that these changes in enforcement have brought up as an issue but instead continue to focus on caring for our community. The RACGP and the AMA welcomed our government's decision and they support our government's amnesty to give GPs and medical practices the opportunity to come into compliance with the payroll tax amnesty—an amnesty that has led the nation.

Many members will have met Aaron when he came in here yesterday as part of the GPs @ Parliament program. He thanked me for my advocacy on this issue because it was certainly something that was concerning to him. Aaron is really appreciative of the amnesty and the fact that it gives GPs an opportunity to comply with the legislation and the revenue measures. As the Treasurer said, this tax is not going to apply to compliant practices and every medical practice has until 2025 to change their structure should they need to if they are not currently compliant. If the opposition motion gets up as written, it will wind back the clock and force GPs and GP practices such as Aaron's to pay that payroll tax. This motion is scaremongering at best. At worst, I am genuinely concerned that those opposite do not understand how this revenue measure works. That is a scary thought considering that they hope to be in government in just over a month.

Our government's commitment to affordable primary and emergency health care does not end there. Under the Miles government, we have opened satellite hospitals to ensure people who need to be seen urgently, but cannot get to a GP and do not need emergency care, can be seen urgently. Those facilities work in conjunction with our amazing community GPs and, of course, the federally funded

urgent care clinics. All of those services are proudly supported by our government. I cannot tell members the number of families who have told me how grateful they are that they could go to one of our satellite hospitals to receive quality after-hours health care for issues such as suspected broken bones, especially for children, on weekends or late at night when their GP practice is not open. That is just one of the ways that our government is supporting affordable health care, unlike those opposite who called our satellite hospitals 'fake' hospitals. I would say that the thousands of Queenslanders who have received help and treatment at our fantastic hospital facilities respectfully disagree.

To be crystal clear, no GP practice that complies with their obligations will ever have to pay this so-called tax. I believe that the members of the opposition know that.

Mr Hart: You called it a tax. You said it was a revenue measure.

Ms PUGH: Oh my goodness me, member for Burleigh: get on the speaking list. Those opposite do not like it because they know that this is a sham motion—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Order, members! Direct your comments through the chair, please, member for Mount Ommaney.

Ms PUGH: Those opposite do not like it. This motion is a sham.