




Speech By
Mark Bailey

MEMBER FOR MILLER

Record of Proceedings, 6 March 2024

HEALTH AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (NO. 2)

 **Mr BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (6.42 pm): Access to quality health care is a fundamental human right, and this bill goes some way to not only increasing access to health services for regional and rural Queenslanders but also increasing the quality of health care in terms of midwife-to-patient ratios. Before I comment on those aspects of the bill, I will respond to the member for Maiwar's contribution. Progressive coal royalties have funded a massive expansion of our healthcare system. This is well known. You would not know it from listening to the member for Maiwar's speech, but we are seeing—

Mr Berkman interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Lui): Member for Maiwar, cease your interjections.

Mr BAILEY:—a dozen hospitals being expanded. Three new hospitals are being built. That is on top of the new hospitals we have already built in places like Roma and Kingaroy—areas that the conservative parties ignored when they were in power. We continue to work with the healthcare industry and professionals to ensure quality health care continues to increase in this state. To be frank, the funding from progressive coal royalties into our healthcare system is transformational. It is sad to see the alternative universe that the Greens party continue to put forward—they are devoid of reality—

Mr Berkman interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Maiwar is now warned under the standing orders.

Mr BAILEY: They never acknowledge the things that are actually being done. To call for yet ignore the things that are being done seems to be the Greens party's strategy. I digress.

This government pioneered nurse-to-patient ratios in 2016. We are very proud of that record. It has increased the quality of health care for Queenslanders right across our state. The ratio of one midwife to six patients including babies means a much better healthcare system for parents and the next generation. The trial that was completed in July 2023 was about laying the groundwork—working collectively with our workforce of midwives and nurses, whom we have a tremendous respect for, particularly through the Queensland Nurses and Midwives' Union, to get this right. I think this measure will be welcomed by parents right across Queensland. They know that when it comes to quality health care, it is only this Miles government that has the interest in making the healthcare system better.

We have seen the opposition oppose ratios once again. What do they not understand about the 21st century? We need minimum standards of health care to ensure people are looked after in their time of need. They talk big on health, but they do not deliver in terms of voting for better health care. This is a great opportunity for the LNP to show their credentials. Once again we see weak leadership from the Leader of the Opposition—no courage, no interest in good policy, a weak approach to things and caving into vested interest—rather than focusing on the quality of health care for Queenslanders in our system. That is what we need to see.

I will comment about the access to choice for Queensland women in rural, regional and remote areas. I believe very strongly in the right to choose. It is the right of every person to make those healthcare decisions for themselves without coercion from the state or from oppressive laws. We see that right under assault worldwide. It has been taken away from millions of women in the US with the assault on the Roe v Wade decision by the Trump forces. It is not something that is secure forever; it has to be fought for. This government believes in a woman's right to choose. We also believe that women in regional, rural and remote areas should have access to that choice in a practical sense. That is what this bill provides. I am proud of this government that backs Queensland women to exercise that right and increases the access for them, if they wish to take up that right to choose. This means better health care for regional areas. Again, the LNP is failing regional Queenslanders by voting against their ability to obtain better health care.

We know what this is about. This is about our government's commitment to human rights and better health care and the opposition caving into the extreme right that is being driven by the Trumpites in the United States. We know that Amanda Stoker is not coming in here to support the status quo when it comes to the right to choose. We know what the agenda is because the Leader of the Opposition has allowed Amanda Stoker to run and join his team. What does that tell you? It tells you that those battles are in the future, but they are not willing to be honest about it.

The speaking list for this debate is very interesting. I do not see the names of the members for Clayfield or Chatsworth. We know their record on this issue, yet they do not appear to be on the speaking list.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. It is convention not to reflect on members who are not in the House or on the speaking list.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will seek advice. Member for Nanango, there is no point of order. The member for Miller made reference to an absence from the speaking list.

Mr BAILEY: It will be interesting to see how the members for Chatsworth and Clayfield vote on this legislation given what we know to be their small-l liberal principles—

Mrs Gerber interjected.

Mr BAILEY: That obviously landed. It will be interesting to see whether they continue to support their principles or whether they have been rolled by their Liberal National party room and locked into a vote. It will be very interesting to see whether they vote as per their conscience in terms of access for women and the right to choose no matter where they live in Queensland or whether they just sign up to the partyroom vote. I will be watching. We will all be very interested to see that because we know that, with Amanda Stoker coming into this chamber, women's right to choose will be under threat from an LNP party room—

Opposition members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Lui): Members to my left, order.

Mr BAILEY: We are hearing a lot of interjections from the LNP because obviously this is an issue—

Mrs Gerber interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Currumbin, you are now warned under the standing orders.

Mr BAILEY: They do not like their record to be outlined. The fact is when the legislation was debated in 2018 all but three of their members voted to keep the right to choose criminalised in Queensland.

Mr Perrett: As was their right.

Mr Hart interjected.

Mr BAILEY: I hear an interjection from the member for Gympie and the member for Burleigh—they all voted to keep women criminalised. That is what they did.

Mr Perrett: As was their right.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Gympie, you are now warned under the standing orders.

Mr BAILEY: I remind them of their record and they continue to display that disgraceful behaviour on this bill. I expect anybody with a conscience who believes in women's right to choose to vote for this bill—full stop. There should be no compromise about that. It will be very interesting to see that because we want a better healthcare system for all Queenslanders—those in regional towns, those in remote areas, those in all parts of the state.

The reality is the technology has changed considerably so that medical terminations as opposed to surgical terminations are now often the preferred way and they are less invasive. This bill allows nurse practitioners, endorsed midwives and appropriately qualified nurses to support Queenslanders who do wish to exercise their fundamental human right to choose their future. This government will always support them to do so. We cannot rely on the LNP or the opposition to do that. They can dance around, they can use as many clever words as they want, but Queensland women need to know that if they want their right to choose maintained and expanded, as per this bill, it is the Miles government that is backing up their human rights and their healthcare system. It is the LNP who are their greatest threat.

They are getting Amanda Stoker, a far right extremist, into this chamber if she wins a seat—we will wait and see how that goes. She is being allowed into the Crisafulli team, the Leader of the Opposition's team. She is not coming here to make up the numbers. She is coming here with her agenda. She will knock someone off the frontbench on that side; there is no doubt about that. We will stand firm against that sort of right-wing extremism in the Miles Labor government. We will fight it to the end.

This is an important issue for Queensland women. I congratulate the Premier and the ministers for bringing forward this bill. This will mean better health care and better human rights for Queenslanders, particularly women, right across the state as well as patients.