




Speech By
Ros Bates

MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA

Record of Proceedings, 11 September 2024

MOTION

General Practitioners

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (5.22 pm): Can you imagine asking Queenslanders to pay more to see their doctor in the middle of a health crisis? Can you imagine asking Queenslanders to pay more to see their doctor in the middle of a cost-of-living crisis? Can you imagine doing that? It is 'rocks in your head' type stuff, but it is where we are in Queensland under a Labor government that is so far beyond functional and so far out of touch it is no longer funny. It is no surprise that this patient tax by stealth is brought to you by the 'taxer in chief', the member for Woodridge—the Treasurer. He has serious form. Who could forget it was the Treasurer who introduced a renter's tax in the middle of a housing crisis? He stood by it, and he stood by it and he stood by it. The chorus of experts calling out the madness became a tsunami but, he still stood by it, and I think he still does. There is not a cent of taxpayers' money that the Treasurer does not think he is entitled to. That is exactly what he has done with Labor's GP tax by stealth.

What the Treasurer is doing, in effect, by pushing ahead with this tax ruling is asking Queenslanders to pay more. He is asking them to pay more every time they need to see their GP. If you need a new script from your GP for medication to manage your chronic disease, under Labor you will pay more. If you need to take your toddler to the GP because they are suffering from croup, under Labor you will pay more. If you need to get a blood test result from your GP to check your cholesterol, under Labor you will pay more. Queenslanders cannot afford that—they simply cannot. The knock-on effects of this tax ruling are well known—maybe not to the Treasurer, so let's spell it out for him. If Queenslanders cannot afford to visit their GP, they might avoid getting medical help altogether. That is a disastrous outcome. They will become sicker. Their conditions will worsen. Guess where they will go? They will end up sick and unwell in our emergency departments. Valuable bed space will be taken up by patients who could have been treated in the community with timely access to primary care.

It is only those members on the opposite side who seem surprised that demand at our hospitals keeps increasing. We have a growing population, an aging population, a sicker population, yet they are somehow shocked that more people need to visit an ED, or need surgery, or will call an ambulance. Make no mistake: Labor's patient tax by stealth will make that worse. It will exacerbate the problems our public health system already faces.

You would think that the Minister for Health might have tried to intervene in all of this. Surely an attentive minister who is across her brief would have stepped in and said, 'Whoa, Treasurer, you can't do this,'—oh, no, not this minister. We all know what she has been up to. She is lurking. She is stalking. She has her eye on something but it is not the good functioning of Queensland hospitals. Her eye is on the prize—the Premier's job. The minister is not even hiding it anymore. It is all out in the open. 'Come talk to me at the end of October,' she said. I mean, seriously, talk about the wrong priorities.

Queensland has recorded the worst consecutive six months of ambulance ramping on record. Ramping sits at nearly 45 per cent. Queensland has just recorded the longest ever elective surgery waiting list on record—more than 61,000 patients. The waiting list to see a specialist is nearly 290,000 Queenslanders. All of that, and they still want to make an appointment with the GP more expensive. It flies in the face of good reason, it flies in the face of common sense and it flies in the face of good health outcomes. Those opposite are now too far gone to realise all of that.

After 10 years of Labor, Queensland is engulfed in a cost-of-living and health crisis. Labor is determined to make things even worse by driving up the cost of seeing the family doctor and forcing more Queenslanders into emergency departments. I say to the people of Queensland: the only way to change Labor's chaos and crisis is to change the government on 26 October. Show Labor the door in 2024.