



Speech By  
**Hon. Shannon Fentiman**


**MEMBER FOR WATERFORD**

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Record of Proceedings, 14 February 2024

**MOTION**

**Miles Labor Government**

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women) (5.11 pm): I move the following amendment—

That all words after 'notes' be omitted and the following inserted:

'Queenslanders', including those in Far North Queensland, views regarding community safety, the national cost-of-living crisis and access to health services;

- (b) notes the Labor government's strong investment in community safety, including supporting victims of crime and delivering more police resources;
- (c) notes the delivery of more than 1,450 FTE positions in the Cairns HHS and Torres and Cape HHS since 2015;
- (d) notes the strong investment by Labor governments in new and improved hospital facilities and services in Far North Queensland;
- (e) notes the record cost-of-living relief being provided by the Miles government;

and condemns the LNP for:

- (i) promising to cut 90 police from the Far North region
- (ii) sacking approximately 402 health workers in the Cairns and Torres and Cape HHSs;
- (iii) having an express policy of lifting wholesale power prices and attempting to sell Queensland's electricity assets which would have increased electricity prices;

and commends the members for Barron River, Cairns and Cook for their ongoing support of their communities, including during the recent natural disasters.'

It was great having one of 'da boys' from Toowoomba South lecture our hardworking members from Far North Queensland about our investments. I am not sure who is running the parliamentary strategy of those opposite, but whoever it is needs to reconsider what they are doing, because going after the members for Cairns, Barron River and Cook, who have helped deliver the largest ever investment in health care in Far North Queensland, is probably not the best idea. Thanks to these hardworking Labor members there are more than 1,450 more healthcare workers in the Far North than there were when we came to government. It is thanks to these hardworking Labor members that we are expanding the Cairns Base Hospital by 64 beds, including a new 32-bed surgical centre, and it is thanks to these hardworking Labor members that we have seen investment in the Cairns HHS budget increase by 95 per cent compared to what they received from those opposite. Why? It is because the members for Cairns, Barron River and Cook are passionate advocates for their communities. That was on full display during the recent natural disasters. They care about helping their communities when their communities need it most. They do not just go about whipping up fear for the nightly news.

We know that those opposite do not care about Far North Queensland. Why would they have sacked 306 health staff in the Cairns district and why would they have sacked over 96 staff in the Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Service? Why would they have gutted \$45 million from mental health services? They were the first government in Queensland's history to take funding away from mental health. What has been the response on this side of the House? A mental health levy and now a \$1.6 billion investment in Better Care Together, a mental health levy those opposite do not support. When we talk to communities in Cairns, across the cape or in Barron River about how we are supporting people with their mental health, including young people doing it tough, we remind them that we have a record investment with a mental health levy and that if those opposite win government that is all at risk. What will those opposite do with that mental health levy? They will absolutely walk away from it because that is what they said they would do when we introduced it.

If the LNP cared about the Far North it would not have cut funding from local NGO services like Diabetes Queensland or the Royal Flying Doctor Service. The Royal Flying Doctor Service up in the cape and the Torres needs funding. Those opposite would have us believe that those days are over, but it is not true because we have recently heard the member for Burnett talk about how the staff are overpaid. We have heard the member for Mudgeeraba call regional health workers duds. She has still not apologised. And who could forget most recently the member for Mudgeeraba saying that she aspires to the Newman government's record on health. After all, the member for Mudgeeraba was the first nurse Campbell Newman sacked.