




Speech By  
**Hon. Shannon Fentiman**

**MEMBER FOR WATERFORD**

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Record of Proceedings, 13 June 2024

**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL; REVENUE  
AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL; STATE FINANCIAL  
INSTRUCTIONS AND METWAY MERGER AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women) (2.06 pm): I rise to speak in support of our great Labor budget that was handed down by the Treasurer on Tuesday. The Miles government is doing what matters for Queenslanders and that is why there is such incredible relief for Queensland families and households with our cost-of-living measures. That is what Labor governments do: we step in and we help people when they need it most. That is all at risk from those opposite.

I was listening keenly to the Leader of the Opposition's budget reply speech. I was waiting to hear just one idea about health and to see just one dollar committed. In fact, I was listening so closely that I was taking notes. I took notes on what the Leader of the Opposition said he would do on health. These are my notes.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Member, read from it or table it.

**Ms FENTIMAN:** There is nothing on the piece of paper, Mr Deputy Speaker. I am happy to table it for the benefit of all members in the House because there is—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Then table it, please.

**Ms FENTIMAN:**—not one idea, not one policy and not one dollar for health.

*Tabled paper:* Document, dated 13 June 2024, titled 'LNP Budget Reply Speech—Health' [1062](#).

As we can see, once again, the Leader of the Opposition has come up short—very short. There was not one new idea or dollar for our health system. The fact that we have a record budget for health, with \$28.9 billion and a \$1.7 billion workforce strategy, seemed completely lost on the Leader of the Opposition who did not make one mention of what they would do to support our hardworking frontline staff and alleviate the pressures our hospitals are under.

The Leader of the Opposition had no policy announcements for Queensland women but just rehashed his undercooked policy to get new mums back into the workforce. He claims he is going to give those mums who have taken time out of the workforce \$5,000, but he has only allocated enough money to give those mums \$1.50 a week. If the Leader of the Opposition thinks that you can buy a laptop for \$1.50 a week, then I say he is absolutely dreaming. That is how much he values women's economic security.

We did not hear one word about domestic, family and sexual violence—not one. That should not come as a surprise because the shadow spokesperson for the prevention of domestic, family and sexual violence did not mention domestic, family and sexual violence on her social media even once during the month of May, which is Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month. Can you believe it?

It is clear that the Miles government is focused on doing what matters for Queensland. In my electorate of Waterford there are so many wins: \$1,000 off power bills; 50-cent fares; and 20 per cent off rego. We are delivering the biggest ever cost-of-living relief for Queenslanders, and locals in my community love it. I recently caught up with Irma and Camillo from Underwood. They are pensioners who are absolutely over the moon about the fact that they will not have to pay a power bill at all next year. While doorknocking and holding mobile offices I have heard from countless locals about what a difference the 50-cent fares will make.

I am also so proud of our government's support for women. We have a massive Queensland health budget again this year. The Women and Girls' Health Strategy is a billion dollars over five years. Did we hear women's health mentioned at all by the Leader of the Opposition? Absolutely not. We know that our state is stronger when women fully participate in the economy and their health needs are met.

We are investing in women's safety with a permanent 20 per cent uplift to our hardworking domestic, family and sexual violence support services. We always will remain focused on eliminating the scourge of domestic and family violence. It is also why we are delivering a \$56 million boost to our hospitals, to provide timely and compassionate care when victims show up to our hospitals needing forensic medical examinations. Again, we hear crickets from members opposite on women's safety. With this funding we are setting up a forensic medicine body that will provide expert clinical and organisational leadership, statewide clinical training and mentoring. This is also bolstered by our \$1 billion Women and Girls' Health Strategy. Only a Labor government will deliver for women and girls and their health.

I am so proud of our record investment in health. It is a more than 10 per cent increase on last year. We know that we are delivering for the hardworking frontline staff. We are building the thousands of extra beds that we need. We have all of our ideas in our \$1.1 billion Putting Patients First Strategy, designed to take the pressure off our hospitals and reduce ambulance ramping. Again, there was not one idea from those opposite.

Mr Deputy Speaker, you have reviewed and approved my speech for incorporation. As such, I ask that the remainder of my speech be incorporated into the *Record of Proceedings*.

*The speech read as follows—*

It is a transformational budget that helps address the burgeoning pressures the health system is experiencing now, while laying the groundwork to meet the challenges of tomorrow.

This is a Budget that's been informed directly by frontline health workers, health service staff, and stakeholders—because they are the experts, and we will always listen to them.

Over 77 years ago, Queensland became the first state in Australia to provide free healthcare to all.

I am proud to be part of Labor Government that recognises public healthcare is a lifeline for people in their time of need, and will always fight to protect that.

Putting Patients First

I am proud of the \$1.14 billion investment in the Budget to expand our successful Putting Patients First strategy in 2024-25.

It builds on the initial investment of \$764 million to target pinch points in our health system, develop our workforce and enhance the level of care to the community.

No-one wants to be in hospital if they can avoid it but unfortunately more people are presenting for care than ever before.

There will always be times when people need to be present to hospital for care and, in some cases, be admitted.

The additional \$190.8 million under Putting Patients First will help operationalise than 400 new beds to help meet demand.

I know how important receiving care close to home is to patients and their loved ones, which can be challenging at times in a state as geographically vast as Queensland.

Bringing healthcare closer to home reduces demand on our hospitals while improving access to services.

We have seen the results of this from our successful satellite hospitals, which to date have cared for almost 80,000 Queenslanders and reduced pressures on the emergency departments of some of our busiest hospitals.

Workforce

But we know that these measures would not be possible without our healthcare workers, who are the backbone of our system.

They are the ones who support us in our most vulnerable moments.

And we must support them, which is why our \$1.7 billion Health Workforce Strategy for Queensland 2032 is a cornerstone of this year's Budget.

It includes an investment of \$1.065 billion that will go to growing our workforce by 700 doctors, 2,600 nurses and midwives and 1,000 allied health staff.

This Strategy is focused on training, retaining and gaining the health workforce that Queensland will need.

It's a plan that will deliver \$40,000 incentive payments to trainee GPs, and more places for our junior doctors to train in anaesthetics.

We'll also support our nurses to work at the top of their scope with new Nurse Practitioner Candidate roles, and make training more accessible for student nurses with our Free TAFE program.

We'll also expand our \$5,000 cost of living placement payments for our nursing and midwifery students, making it available for all regional locals without the need to travel.

And we'll invest \$32 million to boost security staffing across Queensland, to make sure that each and every health worker is safe at work.

We'll also invest over \$23 million to secure Queensland's future Nuclear Medicine, Diabetes and Imaging workforces—all of which are critical to providing lifesaving healthcare to regional Queensland.

#### QAS

We are also investing almost \$130 million to hire 268 new ambos.

It will go a long way toward ensuring our ambulance service continues to provide an exceptional level of care despite growing demand.

Our hospitals will also benefit from an injection of 80 specialist positions, including an expansion of dedicated emergency department clinicians, allied health practitioners and mental health clinicians.

These roles have been critical in improving the flow of patients through our hospitals and providing timely care.

#### First Nations

This year's Budget also commits \$145.6 million to strengthen our First Nations workforce as part of our \$324.7 million to address health inequities among First Nations Queenslanders.

A modern healthcare system must be equipped to provide culturally appropriate and safe care to our First Nations people, who are some of our most disadvantaged.

This investment will increase the number of First Nations healthcare professionals and is in addition to \$20 million to improve heart health in remote communities and expand the Healthy Housing Initiative to more areas.

It is part of this government's commitment to ensuring equitable access to healthcare because we know the importance of people receiving the right care at the right time.

#### Mental Health

This year's Budget will also deliver an additional \$457 million under our Better Care Together program.

It means 74 new beds for adult residential alcohol and other drug treatment services in Ipswich and Bundaberg and a specialised hub offering a 10-bed residential alcohol and other drug rehabilitation program for youth in Cairns.

#### Women and Girls Health

As Queensland's largest employer, our government is leading by example when it comes to pay equity and women's economic security, through measures like 10 days reproductive leave and superannuation on both paid and unpaid maternity leave.

I'm also pleased to say the Queensland's gender pay gap continues to fall, at 11.5% down from 14.8% in November 2022.

Separately, we are also allocating \$275.9 million to specifically address women and girls' mental health, chronic conditions, maternity care, and sexual and reproductive health.

This includes \$56 million to establish a dedicated sexual assault response service and strengthen Queensland Health's capacity to deliver timely and best-practice sexual assault care.

It is no secret the pressures on our health system continue to grow. While we are not immune to them, we are not powerless to address them.

Queensland is in a strong position among global healthcare systems to meet these challenges thanks to this record-breaking \$28.9 billion health budget.