



Speech By  
**Hon. Tim Nicholls**


**MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD**

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Record of Proceedings, 11 December 2024

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**Health System, Funding**

 **Hon. TJ NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (2.20 pm):  
It is a hard act to follow.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** Let me say that the hard acts to follow are on this side. The hard acts to follow are not on that side.

I have already revealed the mess Labor's health ministers left the hospital building budget in. Upon coming to office we discovered blowout after blowout to the tune of \$6 billion, affecting hospital building projects and patients across the state. From Cape York to Currumbin and from Brisbane to Bedourie, they left a blowout mess.

The story just gets worse. I have since been advised that Labor left the health budget in an even worse state. This budget should include taxpayer money that supports the delivery of health care, community programs and, most importantly, the wages of our frontline workforce. Instead of providing funding for doctors, nurses and other clinicians, Labor decided to doctor the books. In the lead-up to the election, the member for Waterford announced billions of dollars for quick political fixes with no money in the budget to actually pay for them. Like snake-oil salesmen, Labor offered a cure that does not work and that ends up costing people a lot more.

In the budget, Labor claimed they would provide an uplift to Queensland Health's operating funding envelope of just over \$4 billion over four years. That almost sounds like a plan. It almost sounds like a budget. Upon closer examination it is clear that it is just a tricky cover-up for a \$12 billion budget black hole over four years, where the cost of Labor's panicked commitments are not once, not twice, but three times the size of what Labor told Queenslanders they would cost in their last budget. Labor's \$12 billion budget black hole is a result of one-off, short-term funding injections and a failure to plan for known future health service requirements—the growth that we will see in people turning up to hospitals wanting treatment.

The black hole adds to the \$6 billion capital blowout and is only expected to grow as more of Labor's reckless management of the health budget is uncovered. Labor's \$12 billion budget black hole means they overpromised 60 pre-election feel-good announcements, with no hope of delivery, not enough money to support them and questionable procurement processes. We are only starting to look at some of those procurement processes as well. This is not budgeting; it is a kid with a credit card and no job to pay off that credit card bill.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The cross-chamber interjecting will cease.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** This includes the member for Waterford's, Shannon Fentiman's, additions to the unfunded tab. For example, there is \$1.882 billion missing to support the existing enterprise bargaining agreements. Labor did not properly budget to deliver the wages and salaries of our frontline health staff let alone any of their additional promises to the unions. There is no money over the forward forecasts for the EBAs. This \$1.8 billion that was not budgeted for in Labor's last budget will now have to be found.

There was the \$14.8 million for patient-off-stretcher-time initiatives announced in the lead-up to the election—another short-term sugar hit. Labor tried to stand up a short-term, desperate initiative to improve their horrendous record on ambulance ramping. They are due to expire in January 2025. There is no future funding. It is all gone.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** This is pretty important. It is not just their unfunded announcements that have led to this budget black hole. It is apparent that they did not even understand the basics of how our hospitals operate. Labor rushed through announcements from the capital expansion program for an additional 2,200 hospital beds, but they did not budget a single dollar to operationalise those beds—no nurses, no doctors, no allied professionals, no orderlies; and no-one to provide care to the patients in those hospitals. It is almost like an episode of *Yes Minister* on that side.

If this sounds familiar to people who have been in this place for a little while then that is because it is. We all remember tunnels without trains, trains without seats, dams without pipes. It is the Bligh Labor government failures writ large all over again. They said they would deliver it, they made the promise and there was nothing left to pay for it all. There is a \$12 billion budget black hole delivered by three of the four worst health ministers in Queensland's history, and they are all still sitting on the other side in this place.

Our government, yet again, is left to clean up the mess left by a dysfunctional Labor government. We will do so. We will do so calmly. We will do so methodically. We will work our way through the problem. We will engage with everyone who needs to be engaged with in respect of sorting it out. The Crisafulli government will fix Labor's \$12 billion black hole mess. We will end the cost blowouts. We will deliver world-class health services for Queenslanders when they need them and where they need them.