



Speech By  
**Trevor Watts**


**MEMBER FOR TOWOOMBA NORTH**

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## **ADJOURNMENT**

### **Toowoomba Hospital**

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (6.12 pm): I want to talk about health services in Toowoomba. Toowoomba's biggest employer is the health sector. We have a great program running at USQ in conjunction with UQ that will keep doctors in Toowoomba. They will do all of their work in hospitals as they go through their education, and then they will be placed in our region in Toowoomba and the Western Downs. It is a great program. I have also visited the TAFE where we have some great training programs for nursing to make sure we have a good workforce there.

The crown jewel in all of this should be the Toowoomba university hospital. There will be a sod turning shortly, and it is good that we are upgrading the facilities there because they are sadly needed. It is a little overdue. It is a smaller budget than we had originally hoped for. I am concerned to ensure that, as we go forward in Toowoomba and the Darling Downs, we have services that meet the standards that are required. These are level 5 services, particularly in coronary heart disease, dementia including Alzheimer's, stroke, lung cancer and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. These are the biggest killers for us in our community. We need to make sure we have the facilities to treat these things at the highest standard, particularly stroke and neuro injuries.

Transporting people down to Brisbane does two things. Firstly, it means they say, 'We need more facilities in Brisbane because we have all these people coming in.' Secondly, it means the people in Toowoomba who have serious incidents, whether they be natural or caused through an accident, do not get the care they need quickly enough. We need to make sure that the hospital we are building is a university hospital. There are opportunities there for research facilities to be built. We need to make sure we have the number of beds that are required. Most importantly, we need to make sure we have services to the appropriate standard so we do not have to transfer country people to Brisbane all the time. They would rather be looked after closer to their community. Not only will that save lives when someone needs critical care, but patients will be more comfortable and their families will be able to visit.

This is a great opportunity. It is a massive campus, with 180 acres. There are ongoing opportunities not just with the new hospital but with the facility and the site to be expanded in the future. Any government must look at those opportunities and provide the services and standards to meet the health needs for the people of Toowoomba, the Darling Downs and Western Queensland.