




Speech By  
**David Lee**

**MEMBER FOR HERVEY BAY**

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## **APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL; HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND INNOVATION COMMITTEE, REPORT**

 **Mr LEE** (Hervey Bay—LNP) (5.17 pm): I rise to speak to the Health, Environment and Innovation Committee report No. 12 and the Appropriation Bill 2025. At the outset, I commend ministers Tim Nicholls and Andrew Powell for their diligent and courageous leadership and directors-general Dr David Rosengren and Patricia O'Callaghan for their conscientious and competent work during budget estimates.

There is only a short time available to speak, so I primarily speak to our Hervey Bay Hospital rescue plan—a budgetary allocation which is great news for the people of Hervey Bay. It means easier access to healthcare services. Our Hervey Bay Hospital rescue plan is calmly and methodically laying a solid and strategically sustainable healthcare foundation for Queenslanders. Our Hospital Rescue Plan is making a \$96 million capital investment in Hervey Bay's existing and future healthcare needs. We are steadily and methodically expanding the Hervey Bay Hospital so Queenslanders get easier access to healthcare services. The Hervey Bay Hospital rescue plan will deliver 10 ICU beds, 25 general medical beds, a state-of-the-art helipad and an at-grade car park.

Thirty-one per cent of my community is over the age of 65 and we have the highest rates of chronic disease, as a total proportion of the Fraser Coast population, in Australia. I look forward to collaborating with the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services in developing a fit-for-purpose health service and master plan for the Hervey Bay Hospital.

Our well-considered Hervey Bay Hospital rescue plan is a stark contrast to Labor's failed capacity expansion program. Labor's reckless and botched healthcare plan resulted in some of the highest hospital ramping rates in Australia and record elective surgery and medical specialist waiting lists. Labor's failed Hervey Bay capacity expansion program caused a \$54 million blowout in hospital capital costs, years in delays and broken promises to construct a \$60 million hospital multistorey car park. An independent review into Labor's botched capacity expansion program identified a litany of bungled projects, including Hervey Bay Hospital. The independent report relevantly states—

... projects were planned in around six weeks ... it is impossible to follow best health infrastructure planning practices in such a short period of time

...

The chosen procurement strategy was deeply flawed ... leading to significant project cost blowouts.

...

The chosen contracting framework and risk allocations were not appropriate in the then prevailing market conditions ... a major driver of project cost blowouts.

...

Business cases were not completed ahead of Government approvals, with Project Validation Reports being developed in the months following the CEP announcement, and

Project scopes were developed ... in isolation of consultation with local clinicians and health service executives and their local priorities.

On this side of the House, we methodically plan before making announcements. Labor makes recycled announcements and then reactively plans.

I now briefly turn to Labor's statement of reservation. Labor's statement of reservation is replete with shallow and spurious claims—the same old recycled slogans. Labor's reservations statement exemplifies that age-old statement, 'Never let the facts get in the way of a good story.' It is a fact that the member for Miller apologised to the House for spreading mistruths about perinatal mental health beds being cut at Townsville Hospital. It is also a fact that the member for Miller published misleading and erroneous information about the Darling Downs Hospital and Health Service. Professor Annette Scott, in correspondence dated 29 July 2025, described the member for Miller's comments as not fully reflective of the facts. So please do not lecture this side of the House on transparency and accountability. Labor furthermore selectively quotes a line of questioning to Mr Calvert about Gold Coast construction completion dates, yet Labor members were more interested in what car Mr Calvert drove. If only Labor members took the time to read the independent review recommendations they might better comprehend the importance of sound and robust construction project governance. Labor has not learnt anything from their botched projects.

In closing, the Hervey Bay Hospital Rescue Plan is a well-considered and sustainable \$96 million investment in the future of our Hervey Bay healthcare system. I commend the Health, Environment and Innovation Committee report and the 2025-26 budget estimates to the House.