




Speech By
Joseph Kelly

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

Record of Proceedings, 27 August 2025

MOTION

Chief Health Officer, Appointment

 **Mr JKELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (6.00 pm): Anybody familiar with my CV will know that I could have chosen any number of sporting codes to become a professional sports person. I turned down that many rock'n'roll groups that wanted me to be their lead guitarist. I did not go and see *Top Gun* because the skills that I showed at the Picnic Bay pinball parlour meant that I had jet fighter skills well beyond anything that was on *Top Gun*. I turned all of that down and became a nurse because I wanted to be a nurse.

None of that is relevant to why I am the most qualified person here to talk on this debate tonight. Perhaps nobody in this chamber can relate more to how the person who missed out on the CHO's position feels than I can tonight. Right here in this chamber just yesterday, the health minister gave me a promotion. Members all heard it. I know why he wants to replace the member for Miller, the shadow health minister. He has worked nonstop exposing the many failings of the health minister so it is hard to keep up: shutting down pill testing and gender clinic services; failings in spinal units; cutting the health workforce attraction fund; cuts and delays to the building program; spending three times more on self-promotion than health promotion; and, of course, exposing the dodgy process that is at the heart of this motion.

Members heard it all here yesterday. After the health minister gave me a promotion, probably what members did not see was how chuffed I was. I raced out and started working on my business cards. I got some photos commissioned. I even rang up to inquire how I might get some time on the government jet, but we all know we cannot get a ride on that plane because the Premier is flying on it nonstop. He is on 'Hypocrisy 1' every day. We all know where this story goes. As quickly as I was promoted, today I was demoted. Members all heard it. First he came for the CHO and now he has come for Joe. I think more than anyone else in this debate I can sympathise with the good doctor.

The health minister endorsed him publicly and photos were taken. It seemed like the expert panel's choice of CHO was going to proceed, but then the extreme wing of the LNP swung into action. This is not some fringe group of extreme political nut jobs; it is the political nut jobs who make up the leadership team of the Premier and Deputy Premier.

Intervening in a merit-based selection process demonstrates the lack of integrity at the heart of this leadership team. We have to ask ourselves: why did they intervene? Were they perhaps hoping to attract a better candidate? Perhaps they were hoping that after Carolyn Kennedy got home and started raving about how great Queensland is RFK would chuck in his job and move over here to take over the top job. He certainly seems to share the same views on vaccination as the leadership team of the LNP.

Last night I met Scott McDougall for the first time at the Wear it Purple Day event. Just for the record, I know what a woman is, I know what genes and chromosomes are, I know that sometimes genes and chromosomes do things that mean people need to see health professionals, I know what a

health professional is and I know that we should let health professionals provide advice and expert care to people who seek their support, no matter what. For the record, I also know what a bigot is.

I come back to Commissioner McDougall. I have to admit that there have been many occasions when Commissioner McDougall's advice has made me uncomfortable or made me angry, but it has made me think and rethink. The key thing is that he does not care how I feel. He gives his advice and he calls his advice out based on his experience in human rights law and practice. If I am smart, I will consider that deeply. The CHO is also someone who has to provide frank, fearless and independent advice. I am concerned about what the political interference in this position might mean for public health in Queensland. A good independent CHO might have said, 'Maybe we should flip it and spend three times more on health promotion than self-promotion.'

Let us be really clear about what happened here. A merit-based selection process was interfered with by a bunch of politicians. That should be deeply concerning. None of this had to happen; under this government this has happened. How many times have we sat in this chamber and heard this government banging on and on about integrity? Remember the laptop issue? They went on and on about that. They would even talk about it when they knew it was not true. The irony of the integrity at the base of that!

An opposition member: Nothing on the laptop.

Mr J KELLY: Nothing on the laptop. The Chief Health Officer scandal is a prime example of the glaring lack of integrity at the centre and core of the leadership of the LNP.

(Time expired)