



Speech By  
**Hon. Shannon Fentiman**


**MEMBER FOR WATERFORD**

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Record of Proceedings, 27 August 2025

**MOTION**

**Chief Health Officer, Appointment**

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (6.21 pm): The member for Mudgeeraba spent almost her entire contribution talking about my time as the health minister. It must eat her up inside that she never got to be the health minister. As I was listening to the member for Mudgeeraba it occurred to me that she has something in common with the CHO: she also got sacked by the Premier before she got the job. You would think she might have some sympathy for the CHO.

Let's talk about what has happened with the Chief Health Officer appointment and the inappropriate political interference we have seen from those opposite. Here are the facts. There was a proper, independent, merit-based panel that went through the process and chose the best candidate. That was Dr Krispin Hajkowicz, an expert in infectious diseases with decades of experience. He was told, 'Mate, you've got the job.' Then out of nowhere he got a phone call and he was told, 'Sorry, the job is no longer on the table.' Why? Because this Premier, David Crisafulli, thinks he knows better than a panel of experts that undertook an extensive recruitment process, interviewed many candidates, and found that Dr Hajkowicz was the best candidate, the most suitable. But this Premier knows best. He has admitted that, despite having an independent panel recommend him, he gave advice to the director-general that he did not think this candidate was the best.

We have heard the health minister time and time again say, 'No, under section 52 of the Hospital and Health Boards Act it wasn't us; it's the director-general.' Why has the Premier admitted that he gave advice to the director-general to not appoint the person who was recommended? He does not think the director-general of Queensland Health takes 'advice' as a direction? This is such inappropriate political interference in a public sector role. Why does this Premier think he knows better?

We have heard from the Public Service Commissioner, Mr David Mackie, who said that the Department of Health is required to ensure that the person selected for employment is the eligible applicant best suited for the position. They did determine he was the best person for the position, but it was this Premier and the Deputy Premier who had other ideas. The Premier and other ministers have inappropriately interfered in a public sector appointment—inappropriate interference that could give rise to corruption. That it is exactly the opposite of what David Crisafulli promised.

**Ms Bates:** Says Jackie Trad's best mate.

**Ms FENTIMAN:** What message does that send to every doctor, nurse and member of the Public Service, member for Mudgeeraba? You promised they would be back in charge. The experts said Dr Hajkowicz was the best person and now this Premier says, 'No, we're not going to listen to the health experts, no matter how qualified they are.' This should send a terrible message to every public servant: it does not matter how qualified you are and it does not matter how many decades of experience you have; if you do not fit this Premier's politics, there is no job for you.

While the LNP is busy playing politics with people's careers, we still do not have a permanent Chief Health Officer—at the height of a deadly flu season. Hundreds of Queenslanders have had their elective surgeries delayed because Queenslanders have not taken up the flu shot. I wonder why—because no leaders in the government have encouraged people to get their flu shot. For a Premier to stand up and not even disclose whether he has had a flu shot and to tell people that it is a matter between him and his doctor is the biggest lack of leadership. When it comes to public health, you have to lead by example. He has failed to do that.

Elective surgeries for 185 patients were postponed at four hospitals across the state. Queensland Health reported that 90 per cent of the nearly 44,000 people who contracted influenza this year were unvaccinated. We have a Premier who is refusing to encourage Queenslanders to get vaccinated and we have no Chief Health Officer to step into the breach and encourage Queenslanders to get this vaccination, so we are calling this out. It is why we are moving that the director-general produce the panel documents relating to this appointment and we are asking the committee to investigate. It is not leadership; it is arrogance.