



Speech By
Hon. Tim Nicholls

MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Health System



Hon. TJ NICHOLLS (Clayfield—LNP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (9.42 am): A cornerstone of the LNP government's vision for Queensland is to ensure that every Queenslanders has timely access to high-quality health care, no matter where they live in this great state. That is why this Hospital Rescue Plan is necessary to save the health system. It will save the system from the decade of mismanagement, chaos and crisis under Labor. What did that chaos and crisis look like? We had four failed health ministers in 10 years, record ambulance ramping, a record number of Queenslanders waiting for elective surgery and long waitlists for Queenslanders to see specialists. That was Labor's record after 10 years of failure.

Our plan will deliver. It will deliver new and expanded hospitals as well as the extra beds our communities need. It will ensure we are providing modern, world-class facilities across the state. We will build three brand new hospitals in Coomera, Toowoomba and Bundaberg. Each of those hospitals will have more beds than Labor planned for and each of those hospitals will meet the needs recommended by experts, clinicians and the hospital and health services—recommendations ignored by Labor. On top of this, there will be major expansions at 10 existing hospitals, and I know members on this side will be delighted to know that that will be occurring at Redcliffe, at Mackay, in Townsville and here in Brisbane as well with a new Queensland cancer centre.

We uncovered the disastrous state of the former government's failed capacity expansion program upon coming into government, which has had major blowouts and delays across the board. That is why I commissioned an independent review into the program. That review revealed the program was on life support. Sam Sangster's report laid out the cold, hard reality of the consequences of the panicked and too-late recognition by the Palaszczuk and Miles government of their failure to properly invest in, and plan for, hospital and health infrastructure. That report revealed that in one year alone the total capital spend by Labor was just \$117 million. That is all they were prepared to invest in one year alone in health infrastructure. Mr Sangster said that the \$9.78 billion capacity expansion program announced in 2022 followed 'limited ... new or expansion capital allocated to Health over prior years'. When he said 'limited', he meant 'almost nothing'. He went on to say—

In each case continuing with the currently scoped and programmed projects is an exercise in futility.

An exercise in futility. Labor's planning only ever extended to planning to get a headline. It did not worry about deliverability. It was headlines over deadlines, not about delivering health care. It is no wonder industry expert Adrian Dwyer said only last week that Labor's plan was 'little more than a mirage of media releases'. That is why we are doing the proper planning and taking the time necessary to deliver more than 2,600 beds for Queenslanders. That will mean Queenslanders will have greater access to health services when they need them.

Our Hospital Rescue Plan represents a record investment by the LNP in the state's hospital infrastructure and it provides a credible plan to achieve it. It reflects our government's unwavering dedication to the health and wellbeing of every Queenslanders, no matter where they live. These investments are not just about bricks and mortar; they are about delivering health security for communities across the state. The rescue plan is carefully structured, financially sound and informed by the voices of clinicians, healthcare professionals and community members across Queensland. It is also aligned, as the Premier has said, with our broader strategy to expand and support our health workforce.

This is an integral investment for the future health of Queenslanders. It will ensure our communities can depend on their healthcare system. Only an LNP government can be trusted to deliver the health services that Queenslanders need.