




Speech By
Hon. Tim Nicholls

MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD

Record of Proceedings, 26 August 2025

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

 **Hon. TJ NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (4.57 pm): The member for Greenslopes forgot one C—that is, the C for cowardice. They would not ask one question—not one question from the shadow minister for health, not one question—

Mr BAILEY: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The minister was asked a question by me. He is misleading the House. I ask that he withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Whiting): That is not a point of order, member for Miller.

Mr NICHOLLS: I would like to take the opportunity to thank the Speaker for the welcome change of pace that he brought to the estimates hearings this year. It was actually an endorsement of the decision to have an independent person chair the committee hearings and provide an unbiased opportunity for all to ask questions. My observation was that the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker both did a fine job. It was a privilege to be at the table to answer questions from the committee members, although I was a bit surprised at the paucity of questions to me from those opposite.

I also want to thank the hardworking staff at Queensland Health who do a terrific job in the face of some very difficult circumstances. I thank both the clinicians, nurses and staff who work in those hospitals and those who work in the department for their work in preparation for the budget.

The 2025-26 budget lays the foundation stones to start to repair a decade of decline under Labor and Labor's health crisis and it starts with our record \$33.1 billion investment in the health budget, a greater than 10 per cent increase. We saw this crisis develop over a decade and it was confirmed by the Queensland Audit Office *Health 2024* report. The QAO report called out Labor's record of failures in financial performance and sustainability.

Mr Bailey: How's that CHO thing going? No CHO. Low blow to CHO.

Mr NICHOLLS: The independent Queensland Audit Office—the member for Miller does not like hearing it because it calls into question his entire lefty political beliefs. He talks about ideology. When it comes to an ideologue on the left, they do not get much more left than the member for Miller. Honourable members will not hear him standing up and taking objection to that either, by any stretch of the imagination.

Let's turn around and look at infrastructure. The independent review of the former government's failed Capacity Expansion Program is the driver for our \$18.5 billion Hospital Rescue Plan, a rescue plan that will provide more than 2,600 new beds across Queensland, and the author, Mr Sangster, was a witness called to the inquiry. You would have thought if they had all this concern about the Hospital Rescue Plan they might have asked him a question. Did they ask Mr Sangster a question, one question? Have a guess, colleagues. Can anyone think how many it might be? It was zero—zip, nil, none. That is how many they asked. What we did see is the member for Greenslopes ask the chief executive of the Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service what type of car he drives, because that is

really important to working out how we are going to build the hospital beds, the more than 600 beds at the Coomera Hospital! There was not one question to Mr Sangster about completion dates, funding, when it was going to be delivered or how the planning was going. He was there; he was there for the whole time and not one question was directed to him by the geniuses opposite. As I say, C is for cowardice.

There was not one question about Surgery Connect and how that is delivering more than \$1.7 billion over the next four years to reduce Labor's elective surgery waitlist. There was not one question about the reduction of more than 6,000 people from the waitlist, or the biggest single reduction in one month in a decade, in April this year. Not one question did they ask in relation to the delivery of those services; not once did they want to go near it.

On the flu campaign, not once did they say, 'I wonder where that money is coming from.' When we explained to them that there was no money in the budget, we saw the opposition leader shuffle off and come back with a highly redacted piece of paper that he claimed was a budget submission. 'Give us the whole lot,' we said. 'We will have a look at it. We will ask the question.' But no, everything else was blacked out except one fanciful number, \$40 million broadly spread for nothing. What we know is that in coming to government there was no money allocated for the flu vaccine and now they complain about it and we have 5,000 fewer cases this year than last year under them, our campaign is running longer and we are spending more money in relation to it. So let's put paid to their false scare campaign in relation to that.

The member for Miller did not even have the hide to apologise to the chief executive of the Darling Downs Hospital and Hospital Service for his totally false and misleading claim about surgery cancellations where he exaggerated and frightened the people of regional Queensland with the claims that we know the member for Miller is famous for.