




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

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HEALTH LEGISLATION (WAITING LIST INTEGRITY) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (8.04 pm): I am very glad to speak on this bill, particularly as I follow the minister's diatribe of absolute rubbish. The previous LNP government was delivering absolute dividends when it came to health. It delivered productivity, efficiency and value for money. It drove down waiting lists at that stage and delivered great outcomes for Queenslanders. I congratulate the former minister, the Leader of the Opposition, Lawrence Springborg, for the great goals that he was kicking in health, ensuring that Queenslanders got their surgery on time and that those Queenslanders who needed dental work got it in the recommended clinical time frames. The Newman government was certainly delivering some great outcomes for the people of Queensland in relation to health.

I rise to support the Health Legislation (Waiting List Integrity) Bill 2015. This legislation aims to amend the Health Ombudsman Act 2013 and the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011. Committing to excellence for Queenslanders by ensuring that patients get care within clinically recommended time frames is what responsible governments do with respect to delivering quality public health policy. Waiting list integrity is all about fairness, equity, enhanced quality of life metrics and improved wellbeing for Queensland patients. During its tenure in office, the Newman government set about delivering productivity, efficiency and transparency of health system outcomes via open independent public reporting. The importance of evidence based wait-time policy and associated accountability with transparency and wait-time data reporting should never be in dispute. I call on the Palaszczuk government to commit to this principle on behalf of my constituents in Moggill and also the people of Queensland.

Establishing the Health Ombudsman as the independent reviewer of clinical wait times for Queensland patients in the public hospital system would potentially resolve one of the key issues of data integrity, as auditing by the Office of the Health Ombudsman would signal an enhanced requirement by the Department of Health to achieve and ensure further improvements in health data integrity. The Health Legislation (Waiting List Integrity) Amendment Bill 2015 proposes that hospital and health services provide quality wait-time data to the Health Ombudsman within 14 days of the end of each quarter. The explanatory notes to the bill state—

Wait time data means each of the following

- (a) data on the number of patients of each Hospital and Health Service waiting longer than a clinically appropriate period for surgery, by type of surgery, reported separately;
- (b) data on the number of patients of a Hospital and Health Service waiting longer than 2 years for general dental care, by type of dental care;
- (c) data on the time an outpatient of a Hospital and Health Service waits for an initial consultation with a specialist health practitioner, by type of specialist health practitioner;
- (d) other data, prescribed by regulation, about waiting times for a Hospital and Health Service.

In the submissions to the now former health and ambulance services committee of the 55th Parliament, the Queensland Nurses' Union was concerned that reporting on just one function of the public health system was a waste of time. I think most Queenslanders believe that wait-time data, associated integrity and transparency are pretty important when it comes to patients getting their care within clinically recommended time frames. The QNU's notion of a bureau of health information really has connotations of a large additional bureaucracy in and of itself, further exacerbating this state's growth in debt and deficit via uncontrolled public sector job growth. Really, it could be thought of as payback to unions, which we all know are the dominant influence within the Palaszczuk government.

There is no doubt that public waiting list information audited by the Health Ombudsman would provide confidence and enhance clarity of referral decision making by doctors with respect to making informed choices on what is the most appropriate hospital or service to refer a patient to at any particular time. It has to be said that health performance and health system complaints are not mutually exclusive. In my view, the remit of the Office of the Health Ombudsman could incorporate the proposed auditing function with the consideration of potentially not significant growth in appropriate resourcing. As I indicated earlier, the Health Ombudsman is the most appropriate entity to undertake such a task, as it is already an existing statutory body. By utilising the Office of the Health Ombudsman there are economies of scale in respect to the costs and any potential additional resource implications which were identified by the committee in its report.

Unfortunately, I suspect that when we vote on this bill I will be left waiting just like both Queenslanders and public patients in my electorate have been left waiting by this inexperienced Labor government. This is not that surprising given the Palaszczuk government is frozen at the wheel and has no infrastructure plans for my electorate of Moggill, let alone a credible economic plan to deal with Queensland's growing debt and deficit problems. I take this opportunity to call on the Palaszczuk government to deliver road and public transport infrastructure as well as an additional high school for my electorate of Moggill.

The Health Legislation (Waiting List Integrity) Amendment Bill 2015 has been developed on a platform of sound, evidence based principles with the potential to deliver real benefits for Queenslanders. I support the bill. By opposing this legislation the Palaszczuk government is avoiding scrutiny and accountability in government.

The previous Newman government's wait-time guarantee was an Australian first in order to deliver surgery on time. I congratulate the former LNP government health minister, Lawrence Springborg, for his great work in the Health portfolio. I congratulate our shadow minister, the member for Caloundra, Mark McArdle MP, on bringing this important piece of legislation before the parliament this evening. I certainly call on the Labor government to support this bill as it is comprehensive and positive for the people of Queensland.