

Queensland Parliament Hansard Green

DATE: 16/08/2016

FILE: 16082016_001130_LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY_GREEN CHAMBER.DOCX

SUBJECT: (no subject found)

MEMBER: Mr LANGBROEK

 **Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (10.29 pm): It is my pleasure to rise to speak to the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee estimates report. At the outset I thank the member for Nudgee and the member for Caloundra—the chair and deputy chair—the secretariat, the parliamentary staff, departmental HHS staff and the statutory office holders, not all of whom we got to query in the estimates process. I want to thank the committee for allowing me to attend this hearing and to ask questions about Health. My concerns and the LNP's concerns about the Health portfolio are typified by the minister who just spoke, the member for Waterford, in terms of outsourcing responsibility. Any queries that we on this side ask are somehow interpreted by the government as an attack on front-line staff when that is not the case. We on this side would say that we expect ministers to be able to not outsource responsibility but to be able to answer questions. My concern with the Minister for Health, the member for Woodridge, in this estimates committee was that he was often speaking about a record Health budget but when it comes to the specifics, whether it is a global issue like theatre usage in our hospital systems or specific patient issues such as post-surgery rehabilitation, it is easier for us to go to the HHS and often the CEOs of those HHSs to get specific answers because the minister will say, 'That's not the responsibility of me as the minister from Charlotte Street. The responsibility is with the HHSs.' I want to give the parliament some advice—

Mr Dick interjected.

Mr LANGBROEK: We are happy to devolve power, and I take the interjection from the minister, but devolving power does not mean absolving the minister of all responsibility. It means being able to come in here to answer questions about security issues at Ipswich Hospital, and I know the member for Mount Ommaney has spoken to me about this and it was an issue raised by the member for Everton today in question time. That is a concern for nurses at Ipswich Hospital. The minister just says, 'It's up to the HHS to make sure that security is okay.' When it came to a question I asked the minister today about baby Mason, he very carefully worded the answer to say that he is confident that doctors are abiding by their reporting obligations but there was no specific information in answer to the very specific question that I asked, once again absolving himself of any responsibility.

Another classic example in the estimates committee was the Heart of Australia bus—a service that Dr Rolf Gomes, a cardiologist, is providing throughout regional Queensland as seen on *Australian Story* just a few weeks ago. That was funded by the member for Southern Downs as the former health minister but that funding is not happening under this government. When I asked the minister about that, it was, 'That's back out to the HHSs and it's their responsibility.' We would contend that it is important for ministers, whether it is the child safety minister or the health minister, to be able to come into this place and be able to answer very specific questions. I would be the first to acknowledge that the questions I was asking were about getting the best information—not just to hear about record budgets, not just to hear about how much more is being done or how many more people are being employed. However, it turns out that a \$99 million deficit across the health department means that we would see over 600 job losses in about three different areas—the Metro South HHS, the Wide Bay HHS and the Cairns HHS with 243 positions, 164 positions and 247 positions, and it is this Labor government that is getting rid of those 600 health workers.

When it comes to the Health payroll—and I know that a number of members such as the member for Gaven and the member for Mount Ommaney have mentioned this—it is true that these policy failures are still being reflected out in the electorates, and all members of parliament must be getting these because they are coming to our side as well. If Queensland Health and this minister are going to demand repayments from former staff and workers, they need to be able to detail exactly how the overpayments were made so that they can cross-check against their records. Former workers are not getting much information from the Health payroll support area. One former worker who contacted us recently left Queensland Health in 2010. Some six years after the fact, they received a letter of demand from a collections agency demanding they pay \$900. They have asked for a concise printed pay advice for each fortnight relating to these payments and up to now they have had no reply. On top of this

Queensland Health is now demanding nurses pay back money they never even received. We have concerns that this is the Health payroll system brought in by Labor and administered by Labor that is still overpaying \$700,000 each payroll, and that is not good enough for the people of Queensland.

(Time expired)