

Queensland Parliament Hansard Green

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SUBJECT: Minister for Health

MEMBER: Mr LANGBROEK

Minister for Health

 **Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (12.35 pm): I rise to speak about the health minister's comments in parliament on 10 November and his histrionic display today as well as his statements in the *Sunshine Coast Daily* on 11 November 2016 regarding 15 training places at the Sunshine Coast Public University Hospital. I table the article for the benefit of the House.

Tabled paper: Article from the Sunshine Coast Daily, dated 11 November 2016, titled 'University hospital needs uni'.

During the last sitting, in a ministerial statement on 10 November 2016 Minister Dick said—

In May 2016, Minister Birmingham acknowledged that commitment—

being the request for 15 additional Commonwealth supported places from 2017—

but six months later is yet to commit to the medical places. Once again I wrote to the minister, three months ago, on 3 August. I even offered to travel to Canberra to meet the minister to discuss this important proposal for the Sunshine Coast. I have received no reply; just silence. I wrote again last week and what I did get? Still no reply; just silence.

It seems as though the minister has a case of selective memory. I table a letter from Minister Birmingham of 4 May which might help jog the minister's memory.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 4 May 2016, from the Federal Minister for Education and Training, Senator the Hon. Simon Birmingham, to the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services, Hon. Cameron Dick, regarding Griffith University's proposal to establish a medical school on the Sunshine Coast in conjunction with the Sunshine Coast University Hospital.

In Minister Birmingham's reply he sought an explicit commitment from the state government to provide additional specialist training places equal to the number of students in the new school. Once this commitment is met, Minister Birmingham said that he would give further consideration to Minister Dick's request. Minister Birmingham mentioned that the proposal needed to be 'considered carefully in light of the medical workforce data predicting an oversupply of doctors in the medium term, the current clinical training pressures for medical students and graduates and the difficult fiscal environment'. It is worth noting that the Turnbull government has already agreed to the transfer of 35 medical Commonwealth supported places for 2017 to the Sunshine Coast. Minister Birmingham's request not only means that there will be 15 new places for trainee doctors but also 15 new places to train doctors to become specialists. This is a win for the Sunshine Coast.

Minister Dick wrote again to Minister Birmingham on 3 August and 3 November, but still failed to provide a commitment to the extra specialist training places. I table these letters for the benefit of the House.

Tabled paper: Correspondence, various dates, between the Federal Minister for Education and Training, Senator the Hon. Simon Birmingham, to the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services, Hon. Cameron Dick, regarding Griffith University's proposal to establish a medical school on the Sunshine Coast in conjunction with the Sunshine Coast University Hospital.

There is no doubt that Minister Dick is playing politics with this issue. He is not telling the full story to Sunshine Coast locals. The simple fact of the matter is that the Sunshine Coast is missing out because Minister Dick, the health minister, has not committed to providing 15 extra specialist training places.

Minister Dick is no champion for health in Queensland. He has been claiming that the federal government is to blame for his shortfalls. The minister's claims are just a diversionary tactic to shift the spotlight away from the fact that illegal union activity at the site has resulted in the hospital not being opened on time. Disappointingly, whilst Minister Dick, in true Labor fashion, has tried to point the finger at everyone else, medical students are missing out on important programs that will ultimately benefit Queensland patients in the long run. The people of the Sunshine Coast deserve better than to be taken for fools by this minister who only cares about covering for the unions. The minister has misled the House and I will be writing to the Speaker to have the matter adjudicated—and he did it again today. I will be seeking to have him referred to the Ethics Committee.

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It is interesting too that, on a day when we see that nearly one in 19 Queenslanders is a public servant, yesterday I received an anonymous email from a frustrated Queensland hospital medical professional. The health professional is rightly concerned about increasing red tape and its impact on

delivering optimal patient care in Queensland. In their email, the anonymous health professional—and I would not normally quote from an anonymous source, but in this case the person has mentioned that they are actually concerned about any potential backlash—says—

Many Queensland doctors, nurses and frontline staff remain fearful to voice their experience due to potential repercussions from their employer.

That is why in this email he or she has confirmed what many of us, especially on this side of the House, know to be true—a ballooning bureaucracy does not equal better patient outcomes. That is the point that we on this side of the House make. It is not just about whether 250,000 public servants are too many. It is about whether in the health portfolio they are causing an administrative burden—and that is what it says here in this email, which states—

... I write to you as a frustrated Queensland hospitalist medical professional dealing with the increasing administrative burden that draws resources from our core role—good patient care. Over the years, the administrative body and its processes in healthcare grew significantly.

As at 29 April 2016 there are three bureaucrats per hospital bed. In 2012 it was down to 1.2 per hospital bed in Queensland. He goes on to say—

Health bureaucracy is now again growing faster than the national employment rate. While the salary cost of administrative staff grows, some Queensland hospitals have entire wards and operating theatres that are closed due to a lack of allocated resources.

I table this email for the benefit of the House.

Tabled paper: Email, undated, from an anonymous constituent, to the Member for Surfers Paradise, Mr John-Paul Langbroek, regarding the administrative burden in the healthcare sector.

(Time expired)