




Speech By
Dale Last

MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN

Record of Proceedings, 13 August 2020

PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Burdekin Electorate, Health Services

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (2.49 pm): My fight for First World health services in areas of my electorate continues. Despite the work of groups such as Doctors for Clermont, generous contributions by mining companies and the approaches that I have made to both the Queensland Minister for Health and the federal Minister for Regional Health, little has changed. Today we have a shortage of doctors in Clermont and there are serious concerns about the adequacy of medical and emergency services in Moranbah. In a complete slap in the face for the Queensland health minister and the Premier, the concerns surrounding Moranbah are echoed today by the CFMMEU. To the credit of the federal government, additional funding was made available for doctors in Clermont. Whilst it did not single-handedly solve the problem, we made some progress.

Where is the Queensland government? Where are Minister Miles and the Premier when it comes to playing their part? People in Clermont, Dysart and Collinsville do not have the luxury of shopping around for a doctor like the Minister for Health and the Premier do. If the doctor is busy or called away, their only option is to drive to the nearest town, and that can be a 300-kilometre round trip. That is simply not good enough for any Queenslanders, let alone in a region of Queensland that generates such a huge proportion of the royalties that this state receives. Whilst the federal government has at least taken some action, this health minister and the Premier have done nothing.

I will move on to the situation in Moranbah. Every member in this House knows of recent incidents in Moranbah and other mining towns in the Central Highlands. Every member in this House knows that the Minister for Natural Resources has dropped the ball when it comes to ensuring the safety of miners who work in Moranbah or anywhere else in Queensland. Despite claim after claim from this government in response to the tragic deaths that have rocked Queensland's resources sector, today we are faced with knowing that—and this is confirmed by the CFMMEU Queensland president—the victims of the Grosvenor mine incident were lucky that an ambulance was in the area at the time of the incident and lucky that a visiting doctor was at the Moranbah Hospital.

Under Minister Miles and the Palaszczuk government, being sick or injured in many parts of regional Queensland is a lottery for your life. Some are lucky, as the miners in Moranbah were, but what if luck is not on your side? This Labor government is happy for your health and very survival to come down to luck because you dare to live or work outside the south-east corner. No other conclusion can be drawn when the Minister for Health, the Deputy Premier of this state, fails to act on this crisis. The people of regional Queensland would be wise to remember that on 31 October this year. People who live in rural and regional Queensland deserve the same level of access to medical services as our city cousins have in the south-east corner of the state.