



26 July 2007

Cairns' health hinges on bureaucratic blueprint: JPL

A MASTER plan for Cairns Base Hospital should be fast-tracked, while interim measures to boost cancer services and clear waiting lists should be brought in immediately to ensure better health for Cairns' patients, Queensland Coalition Shadow Health Minister John-Paul Langbroek said today.

Mr Langbroek today congratulated Committee for Oncology Unit Cairns Hospital (COUCH) for being proactive about improving their inadequate hospital facility but said the Beattie Government should have heeded the call long before Cairns residents were forced to take the matter into their own hands.

"The Premier and Health Minister Stephen Robertson have been asleep over the past nine years when it comes to delivering health services and providing clinical outcomes for Queenslanders, especially outside of Brisbane," said Mr Langbroek.

"The fact that residents have to chip in on top of paying their taxes to be afforded basic health services is a grim day for this Government.

"I have visited Cairns Base Hospital and it is a great facility, run by a team of dedicated doctors, nurses and allied health staff who are committed to providing the best service they possibly can.

"But the problem is the hospital is simply insufficient to support the needs of Cairns patients."

Mr Langbroek said it was unacceptable that Cairns patients were shuffled around, discharged prematurely, ferried to peripheral hospitals or forced to travel great distances to receive quality health care.

"Patient care is unequivocally compromised when budget considerations rate more in Queensland Health than clinical outcomes," said Mr Langbroek.

"It is not unreasonable to expect that a city of Cairns' size should be able to treat cancer without the cost coming out of residents' pockets. It defies the ideology of a public health system.

"Even now Beattie Government ministers are contradicting each other over their commitment to improving services at Cairns Base Hospital.

"The Beattie Government should be matching whatever money is raised, regardless of what equipment or services it is spent on and how it fits in with their bureaucratic blueprint.

"Quite frankly, Cairns and the Coalition are sick of their tired line that hospitals will be improved – but not before their elusive design master plans are completed.

"A piece of paper means very little to sick patients. Let's see some of the Action in this Government's trite Health Action Plan."

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