



**ROB MESSENGER MP – MEMBER FOR BURNETT
SHADOW MINISTER FOR TOURISM, REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT,
SMALL BUSINESS & INDUSTRY
SHADOW MINISTER FOR ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PARTNERSHIPS**

Your Messenger

APRIL 2008

Urgent upgrade of Bundaberg’s birthing facilities needed

Member for Burnett Rob Messenger is calling on the Health Minister to urgently upgrade the Bundaberg Base Hospital’s birthing facilities. Mr Messenger said he has spoken with Mrs Ina Climas,

Parliamentary Activity Update:

To date, the total number of speeches Rob has made in State Parliament since being elected to the seat of Burnett in 2004, is 231.

Some of the topics discussed so far this year include:

- Problem Gambling & strengthening gambling laws
- Forced council amalgamation
- Bundaberg Base Hospital crisis
- Townsville Hospital’s cardiothoracic unit closure
- Gene Technology
- Changes to the Coroners and Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration laws

To view any of Rob’s speeches, visit:

<http://www.robmessenger.com>

who, along with her pregnant daughter Paige, recently witnessed approximately 50 to 60 heavily pregnant women waiting for their appointment at the Bundaberg Base Hospital’s antenatal department, with some women forced to sit on the floor in the hallway.

“This highlights the extent of the pressure currently facing the Bundaberg Base Hospital. It is absolutely appalling and unacceptable that heavily pregnant women should be forced to sit on the floor at the clinic’s waiting room,” he said. “There are major problems with the current set up of the hospital, with more than 1,200 births per year but there are only four birthing suites available. Furthermore, if there are complications during birth it takes at least five minutes to get from the birthing suite to the emergency unit. “Women and their babies’ lives are being placed at risk at this hospital and it’s time the Minister listened to the needs of our community and acted,” he said. Mr Messenger has written to the Health Minister requesting an explanation as to why heavily pregnant women are being forced to wait on the floor of the antenatal unit and demanding additional maternity services at the Bundaberg Base Hospital. “The Minister needs to realise that our region’s population continues to grow rapidly, but we just don’t have the health

resources to deal with the population,” Mr Messenger said.

North Burnett Councillor Faye Whelan revealed that she has also seen firsthand the shortage of beds, staff and resources at the Bundaberg Hospital’s maternity unit.

In January this year, Faye Whelan witnessed staff coping with “*more patients than beds*” and was shocked to see that staff at the hospital “*even resorted to turning the lounge into a ward*”.

In a letter to the Hospital’s District Health Manager outlining her concerns, Faye Whelan states “*it was humanly impossible for the rostered staff to assist every waiting mother*”. Mr Messenger said he was shocked that Cr Whelan said she had witnessed a husband virtually having to deliver and care for his wife’s baby on his own due to staff shortages. “These fresh allegations are proof that Mrs Climax’s case is not isolated and this hospital is in crisis.”

“The Minister simply can’t offer lame excuses. Human lives are at risk and what I don’t want to see is women and babies lives lost due to state government under resourcing and underfunding.

“The Davies Royal Commission pointed out that Bundaberg Hospital had been under resourced and underfunded for decades. The Minister’s comments and attitude shows nothing has changed,” he said.

‘Bargara Day Respite’ officially opens



Rob at the Bargara Day Respite official open day, with the service’s organisers Sheri Secomb and Lyn Acquasanta.

Bargara Day Respite held an official open day for its pilot program earlier this year.

The respite service, which is run by Gracie Dixon staff and volunteers, is designed specifically for frail ages or at risk elderly persons, younger adults with a disability under the age of 65, and carers of each of these groups. Bargara Day Respite gives residents in the area easier access to the services, rather than having to get into Bundaberg to access such services.

Mr Messenger congratulated Lyn Acquasanta and Sheri Secomb for recognising the need for such a service in Bargara and making it possible.

Mr Messenger also thanked the Bargara QCWA ladies (pictured below) who give up their time to provide morning tea for all the members of the respite service.

For further information on the Bargara Day Respite, please phone the Gracie Dixon Respite Centre on 4152 4100.



The QCWA ladies behind the scenes!



This "little fella" dropped in to the Burnett Electorate Office to visit his local member. According to local renowned snake catcher Anthony Zink, the 2 Metre, 5kg black-headed python has never before been found in Bundaberg.

Mr Zink, who has been catching and removing snakes (both venomous and non-venomous) from residential and business areas for the last three years, may be forced to cease his voluntary work due to his current vehicle being unreliable, unless he can get assistance to repair his 4WD or alternative access to 4WD transport.

Mr Messenger put out a public call for any willing business or government agencies to assist in any way possible so Mr Zink can continue his important work in our community, however to no avail so far.

Mr Messenger expressed disappointment that the EPA does not provide financial assistance to anyone who holds a licence to remove wildlife which present an immediate threat to human health and safety.

If you have a snake problem, Anthony can be contacted on 0415 473 090.

Springborg visit



Queensland Opposition Leader Lawrence Springborg visited Carlyle Gardens Retirement Village while he was in town recently. Lawrence is pictured with Rob and resident Moira Stick.

Patel petition update

Late last year Rob, along with the Bundaberg Burnett Patient Support Group President Ian Fleming, launched a petition which calls on the former Bundaberg Base Hospital Director of Medical Services Dr Darren Keating to be charged with the offences of official misconduct and attempted fraud under the Criminal Code.

The petition, paper and electronic, seeks to put pressure on the Bligh Labor Government to prosecute Keating given the fact that retired Supreme Court judge and Royal Commissioner Geoffrey Davies made 14 adverse findings and 4 recommendations of legal action and criminal proceedings against Dr Darren Keating.

So far the online petition, which closes on 23 May, has 119 signatures.

Mr Messenger is encouraging anyone who feels strongly about ensuring Patel victims get the justice they deserve to sign the online petition before the deadline.

Please visit Rob's website at www.robmessenger.com and follow the link. Alternatively, the paper petition can be signed at Rob's office, See Street, Bargara.



Rob, Bundaberg Burnett Patient Support Group President Ian Fleming, Member for Bundaberg Jack Dempsey and Patel victims at the official petition launch.

Camping bans in the Burnett must be reviewed

Rob is lobbying the new Bundaberg Regional Council to lift camping bans imposed by the former Burnett Shire Council on popular camping sites throughout the Burnett.

Late last year the Burnett Shire Council imposed camping bans in the areas of Norval Park, Coonarr Beach, Palm Beach, Bucca and Smiths Crossing.

These bans not only affect families who

have traditionally enjoyed the Burnett's magnificent coast and hinterlands over holiday periods, but also severely affect small locally-owned and operated businesses who rely on the trade from campers.

Two Yandaran businesses in particular, including the pub and a general store, rely on the trade from the campers at Norval Park. These businesses have

been severely affected by these camping bans, having lost tens of thousands of dollars.

It is time for those councillors who have been elected to the new Bundaberg Regional Council to show they are really listening to the concerns and needs of the community by reviewing these bans and coming up with a commonsense solution.

Rob will continue to lobby the council to ensure these bans are lifted.

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