

EDITORIAL

The Courier Mail

Another symptom of our sick system

FOR an administration that likes to brag about the number of doctors and nurses it has hired, the Palaszczuk Government certainly is struggling when it comes to managing Queensland's health system.

The sensational sacking of Metro South chief executive Stephen Ayre, who is one of Queensland's most experienced health administrators, is just the latest in a boiling hotpot of problems.

Dr Ayre's removal from his lucrative \$645,000-a-year post comes after Logan Hospital recently ordered paramedics to wait outside with patients, rather than dump them in corridors.

The move was in defiance of Queensland Health's official "rapid transit" policy, which caused friction between doctors and paramedics and was quickly rescinded after it was made public.

In the weeks before that, was the Code Yellow scandal, when every public hospital in the state's southeast corner, except the Queensland Children's Hospital, was operating at capacity.

This saga forced the Palaszczuk Government to go cap in hand to the private sector to provide extra beds for public patients, a somewhat ironic turn of events, given the administration has repeatedly disparaged the work of these institutions.

And now today, *The Courier-Mail's* medical reporter Janelle Miles has revealed that a \$4 million cardiac catheter lab installed in the overburdened Logan Hospital was turned into a unit for day surgery.

This decision has forced patients with heart conditions to travel to the Princess Alexandra Hospital, which currently has an elective surgery wait list of almost 3400

patients. At last count, about 100 of these patients had been waiting longer than clinically recommended for their treatment. While regional Queensland patients routinely have to traverse much greater distances for their treatment, clearly the failure to maintain a facility that was deemed necessary just five years ago is providing people with heart conditions with a second-best option.

Health Minister Steven Miles says that the appointment of Metro North chief executive Shaun Drummond to replace Dr Ayre was a decision made by the board and done "in the best interests of patients".

Staff were informed by Metro South Board chair Janine Walker, a former ABC board member.

Mr Miles and Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk yesterday continued to beat the same drum about all the extra staff that Labor has hired and all the redundancies that were ordered under the previous LNP government, led by Campbell Newman.

However, the drone of this thumbing would increasingly be falling on deaf ears among voters, given Labor has now been in charge for more than four years.

Most importantly, it would mean nothing to those thousands of patients left languishing on waiting lists or forced to travel to other hospitals because their local one is over-run with patients.

It is becoming increasingly clear that something has gone awry in health over recent years.

The Palaszczuk Government needs to explain to Queensland why all the extra staff it has hired, as well as the introduction of so-called nurse-to-patient service, has failed to lead to an improvement in the performance of our hospital system.

Let's milk this great idea

A QUEENSLAND company that has developed world-first technology that keeps milk fresh for more than 60 days is an inspiring example of what can be achieved in the Smart State.

Naturo Pty Ltd, based on the Sunshine Coast, has spent five years perfecting the ground-breaking process and gaining the necessary approval from the food safety regulatory body.

Because the method gives refrigerated fresh milk such longevity, it can soon be shipped throughout Asia, to countries such as China, Japan and Malaysia.

This swings open a huge door to lucrative new export markets for the nation's long-suffering dairy

industry. Australia is one of just a handful of countries that produces more milk than can be consumed domestically, leaving significant volumes able to be exported.

The State Government is to be commended for chipping in \$250,000 to help with the development of the initiative; and Naturo's next step is to raise capital for a plant where it will produce its unique new brand of milk.

What we don't want to see is the factory built interstate.

Every assistance and incentive available should be offered in a bid to keep cutting-edge projects such as this – and the jobs and profile they deliver – firmly within Queensland borders.

COLUMNIST Paul Williams (C-M, Apr 30) has identified the blight on Australian politics that Clive Palmer represents.

Palmer's facile populist message, advanced by boundless funding, is an unfortunate reflection on the level of political discourse in our country.

To adopt the shallow rhetoric of the Donald Trump campaign in an effort to attract the marginalised vote smacks of insincere opportunism.

Fortunately, many voters will see through Palmer's campaign and reject it as another right-wing minority group seeking to buy favour with the electorate.

The contribution to politics that Clive Palmer and Pauline Hanson have made is minimal, despite their fear-mongering and divisive agendas.

These parties have little to say on good economic management and key social justice policies.

Doing preference deals with them must be rejected so that we can elect a parliament committed to advancing the greater good of the country.

Steve Jenkins, Sinnamon Park

I AGREE with Paul Williams to a degree, but I have an alternative theory to his "aorta politics" to describe why some voters are contemplating voting for Clive Palmer as a protest vote in the upcoming Federal Election.

I call my theory on disgruntled Palmer voters, "big-toe politics".

It works like this: When you stub your big toe on the edge of a couch or



HOT TOPIC

Hint of opportunism in Clive Palmer's populism

table, it is always the fault of "the object" you have painfully come into contact with.

It isn't the fault of the person connected to that big toe.

The same analogy goes for frustrated voters, who are trying to come to terms with the reality that the pain they are feeling in their big toe emanates from both Scott Morrison and Bill Shorten – and

neither appeals in the toe stakes. The elixir for some voters to cure the pain in their big toe is to park a protest vote with the "light on detail" United Australia Party.

The quixotic Palmer, who tilts his own multimillion-dollar, light-on-detail windmill in any direction he sees fit, helps ease the pain of some of these so-called whiny voters, as Williams suggested.

The reality, however, for many of these disgruntled big-toe voters is that the "object" of their disdain and pain is both Morrison and Shorten, and nobody can change their minds.

Paul Henderson, Wynnum

PM has winning

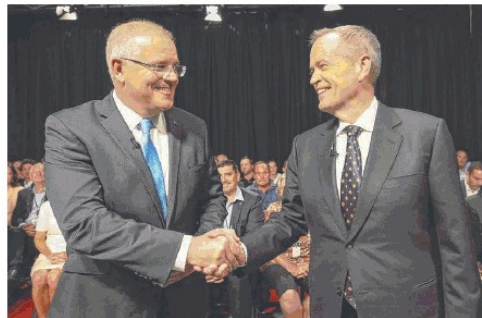
I WATCHED the telecast of the first leaders' debate in Perth (C-M, Apr 30) and found the audience only clapped when Bill Shorten was talking.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison (pictured with Shorten) was on top of every subject.

Shorten was very short on facts. The Labor leader, who is a so-called expert on electric cars, couldn't answer how much they cost.

I gave Morrison the winning edge in the debate. I thought Shorten came a poor second.

Ian Sutton, Robina



WHEN is a pensioner not a pensioner?

As a self-funded pensioner, and after listening to Bill Shorten in the leaders' debate, I have concluded I am not a pensioner as defined by the Labor Party.

To be a pensioner one must rely on a "hand out" from the government, according to the Labor Party.

I suppose I must be thankful that Shorten has told me where I stand before I cast my vote.

Arthur Weston, Wishart

NAKED MANIPULATION

MOST Australians will be disgusted at the televised revelations of Steve Dickson's behaviour in a US strip club (C-M, Apr 30).

It clearly demonstrates that he is unsuitable for public office.

However, more concerning is how the Qatari Arab-owned Al Jazeera network can deliberately manipulate Australia's electoral process.

This seven-month-old footage was

withheld until after One Nation could not replace Dickson with another Senate candidate.

Whatever your political allegiance, all Australians should be concerned by foreign interference in our democratic processes.

Bob Holmes, Coombabah

THERE is an old adage that drink brings out the true personality of the drinker.

Mostly, it brings out guilt, apologies and ruined lifestyles.

Youth and inexperience can sometimes be forgiven, but mature people, regardless of status, cannot expect excuses and apologies to be mitigation.

We have seen a litany of unacceptable drunken episodes from politicians over the years, so education should not be confined to the schoolroom.

Peter Corran, Wakerley

MORE THAN ONE VOTE

I AM in total agreement with Raymond W. Clarke (Letters, Apr 30).

This is how preferential voting works. I vote for Bill, but if Bill doesn't make it, I'll vote for Mary, and if Mary doesn't make it, I'll choose Fred.

Why should any elector have three or more votes?

Any second preference should only have half value, and the third preference should have only one-quarter value.

Any candidates below No.3 should not carry any value.

This system would mean the primary vote has the weighting value it deserves.

Voters would need to number only three squares in order of preference.

Counting and allocation of preferences would be simplified.

This would have the great benefit

Responsibility for election comment is taken by Sam Weir, corner of Mayne Rd & Campbell St, Bowen Hills, Qld 4006. Printed and published by NEWSQUEENSLAND (ACN 009 661 778). Contact details are available at www.couriermail.com.au/help/contact-us

ONLINE
Go to couriermail.com.au/letters to register your view

EMAIL
letters@couriermail.com.au
Text only, no attachments