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MEMBER: Mr PEGG

 **Mr PEGG** (Stretton—ALP) (8.11 pm): I commence by thanking all nurses in our community on International Nurses Day. The member for Greenslopes did a fantastic job of conveying the challenges that nurses face in a typical working day. I know that there are many nurses in the gallery this evening, and I thank them all. Earlier today the senior school captains and acting principal from Stretton State College visited parliament, and it was very heartening to know that one of the school captains, Mikaela, intends to study nursing next year. It is a very worthy vocation and it is fantastic to see that one of our talented young people in the electorate of Stretton is aspiring to become a nurse in the future.

The Palaszczuk government made an election commitment to legislate for safe ratios and workload provisions to ensure better patient safety and better quality health care, and I am very, very pleased to speak in favour of the Hospital and Health Boards (Safe Nurse-to-Patient and Midwife-to-Patient Ratios) Amendment Bill 2015, which will ensure that the delivery of health services in Queensland is safe and efficient. This bill should probably be seen as part of Labor's longstanding commitment over the last decade to deliver better health services to Queensland. I am very proud to be part of a government that is following the Labor tradition of improving health services to enhance the conditions of care for those most in need. I also want to congratulate the Minister for Health for his all hard work in this particular area.

The objective of the bill is to establish a legislative framework to ensure safe nursing and midwifery staff numbers and improved patient outcomes through mandating nurse-to-patient and midwife-to-patient ratios and workload provisions in public sector health service facilities. There is clear research evidence which indicates that the number of nurses and midwives on a shift plays a pivotal role in patient safety and the quality of health services being delivered. Inadequate nursing numbers result in general patient care procedures being neglected. A higher per cent of nurses or midwives to patients reduces these adverse outcomes for patients by lowering patient mortality, preventing adverse events, decreasing the length of stay in hospital and reducing work related injuries, absenteeism and turnover. One registered nurse can decrease patient mortality by 10 per cent.

We want to implement this legislation for mandated nurse-to-patient and midwife-to-patient ratios and workload provisions in the state's public health facilities. When implemented it will enhance safe patient outcomes and ensure that resourcing is matched to patients' needs. The ratios will set the minimum nursing and midwifery numbers required to appropriately and safely manage service requirements. Their legislated use within the public sector will further support existing nursing and midwifery workload management frameworks and processes such as the Queensland Health *Business planning framework: nursing resources* along with professional college standards and good clinical judgement.

The positive effects of this legislation are twofold: firstly, it ensures a safer environment for patients; and secondly, it provides an environment which enables the most effective service delivery by nurses and midwives to their patients. The benefit to patients of minimum ratios are the improvement of patient safety and the quality of care. In turn this reduces readmission rates and post-operative mortality rates. Minimum ratios also provide safer workloads for the front-line public sector nursing and midwifery workforce which improves recruitment and retention, staff satisfaction and greater workforce sustainability.

There was a great example about California in the committee report, and it has also been mentioned by a number of speakers. I note that the member for Caloundra dismissed California. He said that it was only one state. Of course he is forgetting that California is the 'Golden State'. It is the most populated state in the United States, and of course the state of California had a very infamous governor: Arnold Schwarzenegger. It is an interesting case study for those opposite, who have so far spoken against this bill, to have a look at what happened when the Terminator took on the nurses of California. I want to enlighten those opposite about what happened. The Terminator came in as governor and started a year-long legal battle with the state's nurses union over a state law that required more nurses in hospitals. Governor Schwarzenegger opposed the law, which mandated that California's

hospitals raise hospital staffing ratios. He in fact went so far as to issue an emergency declaration which blocked the new ratios. Of course the nurses fought back and the people of California fought back. There was a court fight. The California Nurses Association staged more than 100 public demonstrations against the Terminator. What did the Terminator do? Of course he initially dismissed the nurses' protests against his emergency declaration as the work of 'special interests', but he was later forced to dodge the placard-carrying nurses at public appearances and the Terminator ended up having to take rear entrances to buildings. Rose Ann DeMoro, executive director of the nurses association, said—

Everyone said you can't fight with this guy.

...

If you look at how the campaign escalated, what started as a campaign to reduce nurses in hospitals turned into a statewide war. What we have here is a situation where the Terminator had beaten the predator. He had been Mr Freeze; he had been Conan the Barbarian. Then he fought against the nurses, and the nurses and the people of California won.

That is a very important lesson for those opposite, because there has been a lot of 'hasta la vista' being whispered and even said out loud by those opposite recently. Last week those opposite said 'hasta la vista' to the member for Surfers Paradise, and that is why he is sitting over there. Then the member for Clayfield came in and he said 'hasta la vista' to the member for Mermaid Beach, and that is why the member for Mermaid Beach is sitting over there. There is a lot of 'hasta la vista' being said amongst those opposite but I am sure the member for Surfers Paradise, at least in his quieter moments, says, 'I'll be back.' Many of those opposite no doubt have the view that he will not be back. He might say, 'I'll be back', but he will not be saying, 'I'm back.'

I say to those opposite that if you continue to oppose sensible evidence based reforms that support our hardworking nurses and benefit the health and safety of the people of Queensland, it will be 'hasta la vista' to you as well. Take the lesson from California and take the lesson from the Terminator—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Elmes): Order! The member for Stretton will resume his seat. You will direct your comments through the chair and you will stay somewhat close to the business of the bill.

Mr PEGG: As I was saying, this bill is a very positive step in our healthcare system towards ensuring health and safety for both patients and the nurses and midwives that provide healthcare services. For patients it will deliver the best possible outcomes and ensure their safety, and for nurses and midwives a safe staffing level will empower them to deliver efficient healthcare services.

This is an election commitment that was made by the Palaszczuk government. We are committed to seeing it through so that public hospitals can be provided with safe and quality healthcare delivery. I commend the bill to the House.