



The Hon. Kevin Rudd MP

THE LIBERAL NATIONAL PARTY'S CUTS PUT COMMUNITY HEALTH AT RISK

Friday, 2 August 2013

Prime Minister and Federal Member for Griffith, Kevin Rudd, has expressed his thorough disappointment that the Queensland Liberal-National Government is still determined to seriously downgrade the HIV and STI services delivered by the Brisbane Sexual Health and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) Service (SHHS).

This service, which is located at Biala in the Brisbane CBD, delivers clinical services to approximately 12,000 patient visits each year including around 800 HIV positive patients.

Under the LNP's decision, the Biala Clinic will be reduced from 46 full time staff positions to just 10 positions. The positions to be axed include 15 specialist sexual health nurses, 3 specialist sexual health doctors and 12 allied health and administrative support staff.

The net effect will be the decoupling of STI services from HIV services at the Biala clinic which has been the cornerstone of sexual health and HIV management in Queensland.

The Newman Government, using the cover provided by the Metro North Hospitals and Health Board, are removing the sexual health service based on a Deloitte's report.

This report recognises and acknowledges that STIs are a co-factor in the transmission of HIV and that there are major public health risks for patients with STIs and HIV as a result of reducing the service, but still recommends closing the service and sacking its dedicated staff.

The major risks in downgrading service have also been expressed by Dr Christian Rowan, President of the AMAQ; Ms Judith Dean, President of the Sexual Health Society of Queensland; and by the Royal College of Physicians.

- This decision is just plain wrong on so many levels,? Mr Rudd said.
- It would seem that the Newman Government and the Metro North Hospitals and Health Board are willing to accept the advice of accountants about the medical care for HIV patients and ignore the medical opinions of prominent health experts.
- This is just more evidence of the Liberal National Party's addiction to austerity which completely ignores the needs of our community.
- It is also just the curtain-raiser for the damage that will be done to our health system should Tony Abbott become Prime Minister, Mr Rudd said.

Mr Rudd is looking forward to asking Tony Abbott's handpicked candidate in Griffith, Dr Bill Glasson, if he supports this reckless decision when he debates him next week.

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