

"Mrs Miller Bundamba—ALP) (9.45pm): ...There is real pain in the forced underspend of hospital expenditure—pain, suffering and grief for Queensland families. In fact, I have recently been in contact with Ms Stacey Jaundrell, a patient of the PA Hospital. Ms Jaundrell was initially diagnosed with a rare cancer of the appendix during a caesarean section in early July. A subsequent biopsy identifies two types of tumours and a partial bowel removal and internal chemotherapy was urgently recommended. Stacey was referred to a succession of specialists at the PA Hospital and told she would require a gastroscopy, colonoscopy and CT scan before a laparoscopy to determine what surgery was required. She was told that this would take some time because of—and I quote from a letter from her treating specialist—‘our horrendous waiting list’.

I would like to point out that Metro South underspent its 2012-13 budget by \$20 million. Stacey urgently requires surgery for both bowel cancer and quite possibly a peritonectomy and internal chemotherapy for the rarer peritoneal disease. Neither of these surgeries can occur until the required diagnostic procedures are completed. Stacey has been anxiously waiting for eight weeks for these procedures to be done. She was actually in the operating theatre for these procedures in early October when they were cancelled ‘due to unforeseen circumstances’. Her sequence of diagnostic procedures are now scheduled for the second week of November. What is particularly concerning is that there is only a very small window for a peritonectomy at the PA before Christmas. Stacey is 31 years old—a mother of five children, the youngest child being three months of age. I have also been contacted by another young mother of four who is also waiting for the same specialist cancer surgery at the PA Hospital. Stacey has sought help from a specialist in New South Wales but has been told that there are 40 other patients waiting for similar surgery.

Now I ask all members: how can we make public hospitals declare a profit when these young mothers and their families are anxiously waiting for life-saving surgery? Stacey was told when first referred to a consulting specialist that she could have the procedures done within two days if she had private health insurance. It will be at least four months before the PA Hospital meets its obligation to Stacey. I just hope that she and other patients with life-threatening conditions can survive to get the surgery that they so desperately need and also that they are able to look after their children and see their children grow up. That is what we want to see. I ask the minister to personally have a look at these cases please, because it is all right talking about amending health legislation but we need to look after people personally as well, particularly these young mothers..."