



Save The Lady Cilento Children's Hospital

Open letter to *the Queensland Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk*

Queensland's health system is stretched to the limit. Our state's sickest children are being treated in hospital kitchens and public areas because of a shortage of beds.

Women are still consistently under-recognised in public life, despite the significant contribution they have made to our state. Only three percent of public buildings and monuments across the nation are named after women.

Despite these facts, Health Minister Steven Miles has made the decision to tear down the name of the Lady Cilento Children's Hospital and rename it Queensland Children's Hospital, along with five of the hospital schools.

We are shocked and appalled that the Premier would sanction an action that is a blatant waste of public money that will run into the millions of dollars – not \$500,000 as claimed by the Health Minister – and discredit the name of one of Queensland's first female doctors.

Instead of celebrating Lady Cilento, her name is now to be physically ripped down because a small group of doctors and politicians are seeking to assert their own agenda. Therefore we, the undersigned, are calling on the Premier of Queensland Annastacia Palaszczuk to reverse Health Minister Steven Miles' decision.

Lady Phyllis Cilento broke through every glass ceiling in the medical world and overcame intense misogyny as a female doctor. She was the only woman in her University of Adelaide School of Medicine 1918 graduating class and went on to work at hospitals in London, Paris and New York. She became a prominent member of the Queensland women's movement and highly influential in advocating for children's public health.

She was a beloved figure in Queensland as an obstetrician, paediatrician, author, journalist, columnist, ABC broadcaster and women's activist. Her early work helped save countless women and children's lives in the tropics, including Malaysia and Papua New Guinea, by bringing modern medicine to local communities. Later, her pioneering work and advocacy for good nutrition, family planning and childcare had an immeasurable impact on the lives of thousands of Queenslanders.

She founded the Queensland Mothercraft Association, the Queensland branch of the Business and Professional Women's Club and was President of the Queensland Medical Women's Association. She has been honoured through various awards, including being named Queenslander of the Year and being bestowed a life membership to the Australian Medical Association. Her 65-year career spanned the tumultuous 20th Century and saw her embrace not only new medical breakthroughs but changing social norms.

Minister Miles' decision is not a reflection of the opinions of the majority. A poll in The Courier-Mail found that 82 per cent of Queenslanders do not want the name to change. A poll conducted by the Nurses Professional Association of Queensland found that 85 per cent of nurses do not support a name change either. The Cilento family has been inundated with support from people who recognise Lady Cilento's contributions and feel compelled to act against this decision.

Despite claiming that the decision came after extensive public consultation, damning proof has emerged that the Queensland Government had already begun taking steps to change the name of Lady Cilento Children's Hospital long before officials consulted anyone. Documents lodged with ASIC show that the Queensland Government cancelled the hospital's trading name in January 2018 – more than six months before Health Minister Steven Miles launched this so called 'consultation process'. This evidence makes a mockery of the polling and focus groups and shows that they were nothing but a waste of time and money for taxpayers. Further to this, the Queensland Government surveys that claim to indicate public support for the decision have been found by independent experts to be completely flawed, if not utterly fabricated.

Considering the high cost of this rebrand, which will be charged to a health department already under significant pressure, there is no question that this is a scheme at odds with the best interests of patients, especially women and children. Further to this, it is a step backwards for gender equality in Queensland, and a disappointing indication of the Labor party's views on the professional contributions of women.

We are asking Premier Palaszczuk to stand up for those whose voices are being ignored: sick children who need hospital beds and educated, skilled women around Australia who are trying to shatter the glass ceilings that they face in their own industries.

The rebranding of the Lady Cilento Hospital and its associated schools is heartless, sexist and completely illogical. It represents an extraordinary waste of money, and the Queensland Government turning its back on the values our nation was built on: egalitarianism and respect. The reputation of an inspirational woman is being dragged through the mud and hospital patients are suffering while the elite pursue cheap political gains. A small, privileged group of people will benefit from the name change, with little consideration for the carnage that they will leave in their wake.

As Queenslanders, we want better. We expect more from our politicians and we are standing together to fight for it. We hope that the Queensland Premier will join us, the undersigned, and more than seven thousand people who've put their names to our petitions.



Campbell Newman
Former Queensland
Premier



Deb Frecklington MP
Leader of the LNP



Tim Mander MP
Deputy Leader LNP

Ros Bates MP
Shadow Health Minister

David Abbott MBE, Dr David Cilento, Dr Benjamin W Cilento, Dr Bartley Cilento, Dr Robert Launikiitis, Dr Robert Neville, Dr Ashesh Desai, Dr Emily Tignor, Mavis Salus, Eleanore Ballotin Lotta, Harlyjay Cilento, Maya Cilento, Christia Imran Cilento, Brad Sullivan, Kelly Sullivan, Della Leinart, Jeff Bratcher, Amirah Foote, William Sarniguat, Brian Langen, Jeff Gregory,

Louise Clune, Dr Roberto Fusco, Eileen Cilento, Giovanna Volpe-Cilento, Jason Connery, Jeanne-Marie Cilento,

Paul McDonnell, Sebastian Cilento, Veronika Cilento, David Cilento, Michelle Cilento, Michael Cilento, Wendy Cilento, Nicholas Cilento, Jaymin Cilento, Temen Cilento, Adele Smout, Kate Smout, Harlyjay Cilento, Abigail Cilento, Luke Manion, Melissa Manion, Katherine Manion, Georgia Manion, Dianne Murison, Ana Oertel, Michael Dixon, Allie Wardle, Jill Fowler, Paulette Burt, Ray Burt, Michael McDonnell, Pauline McDonnell, Natalie Chetcutie, Pravin Rodrigues, Sorrina Miti, Brad Sullivan, Kelly Sullivan, Della Leinart, Jeff Bratcher, Amirah Foote, William Sarniguat, Brian Langen, Jeff Gregory, Tim Lynch, Alessandra Battaglia, David Cardarelli, Mariangela Curci, Lily Cilento, Tess Cilento.