




Speech By
Ros Bates

MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA

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ADJOURNMENT

Gold Coast Hospitals, Safety

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (10.37 pm): I rise to update the House on my efforts to secure the safety of staff, patients and visitors in and around our major hospital precincts on the Gold Coast. The Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service, which takes in Gold Coast university and Robina hospitals, is responsible for delivering healthcare services to more than half a million Gold Coast residents, including residents in my electorate of Mudgeeraba.

Late last year, as members are well aware, I observed staff during shifts at these two hospitals as a member of parliament to enhance my understanding of hospital operations. What I saw was shocking. Security were understaffed and overworked, adequate security procedures were not in place and nurses considered assault to be an everyday part of their job. That is why last November I launched three petitions which call on this Labor government to do something about safety in our health precincts. Last week, these petitions were tabled in the House, with hundreds of Queenslanders putting pen to paper and throwing their support behind safer health precincts.

At Gold Coast University Hospital, security officers are often preoccupied with security incidents for hours, leaving staff, patients and visitors at risk. In the next three years, the population surrounding Gold Coast University Hospital—including Griffith University, the Commonwealth Games village and a planned private hospital—will increase the size of that area to that of a small regional town.

We need to act now to ensure that the Gold Coast's largest hospital is secure, and that will ultimately mean ensuring an ongoing police presence at this major health hub. A total of 102 residents have signed my e-petition calling for a manned 24-hour police beat on site at Gold Coast University Hospital.

In recent months, we have seen reports which have raised concerns for community safety in the Robina area. After I personally dropped information about my petition in letterboxes throughout Robina, 134 residents signed my e-petition calling for the Robina Police Beat to be upgraded to a 24-hour police beat to keep the community safe. I also have a postcard petition, which I look forward to tabling in parliament, that was letterbox dropped to some 920 homes. A further 106 residents signed a nonconforming petition, bringing the total to 240 residents.

Under the former LNP government's Safe Night Out Strategy, the maximum penalty for assaulting Health staff increased to 14 years in jail, but too many nurses are still failing to report instances of assault. It is never acceptable for a patient, even if under the influence of drugs or alcohol, to assault our hardworking doctors, nurses and paramedics. We need to ensure our Health staff know to report these assaults so action can be taken. When in government, the LNP ensured being under the influence of drugs or alcohol at the time of an assault could no longer be used as a legal defence, meaning sentences cannot be reduced in cases of drug or alcohol fuelled violence. Almost 500 residents have

signed my e-petition calling for an awareness campaign within the Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service so that nurses can report assaults. It is now incumbent on this frozen-at-the-wheel, do-nothing, say-nothing, be-nothing, know-nothing Labor government to act on these issues and ensure our hospitals are safe—

(Time expired)