




Speech By
Ros Bates

MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Robina Hospital, Mental Health Unit

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (2.56 pm): This morning in the House I raised a very serious matter about the suitability of certain inpatients at the Robina mental health unit. Staff tell me that there are numerous patients in the psychiatric intensive care unit, PICU, about whom they hold grave fears—for their own safety, the safety of other patients and the safety of the general public.

Staff have told me of a number of incidents in their own words which I will relate. A nurse who was sexually assaulted by a patient was told when reporting the incident, 'Stop complaining. You should have a think about your career.' There are concerns that an intellectually disabled patient was not believed when they complained about an alleged sexual assault by another patient as they were considered delusional, even though when questioned later they could detail the date, time, room number and the patient who had perpetrated the alleged assault.

Extra staff were put on in the PICU to 'special' a female patient, not because the female patient required it but to keep her safe from a male patient. Staff have told me that this patient has escaped from the PICU multiple times, often assisted in their escape by other patients in the unit. Staff have informed me that this patient has a history of sexual assaults and that they are constantly AWOL for days or weeks at a time and return sometimes quite unwell of their own accord and at other times with the Queensland Police Service. Staff tell me that the patient's predatory behaviour towards several staff members has been getting gradually worse and that this patient can be very intimidating and aggressive. I have been told that a staff member was trapped in the staff room late at night but managed to escape from this patient and that these incidents are getting progressively worse.

This same patient was transferred from the adult unit, at which the recent fire occurred, to PICU after being caught in the act of an alleged sexual assault on another patient. This patient has passed through the service and is now in the rehab part of the Robina Hospital mental health service, where they have tested positive on more than one occasion to use of the drug ice. Staff believe the incidents are becoming progressively worse, that patients such as this stretch several services and resources and that they and other patients are placed at unnecessary risk and not enough is being done. These were their words. It seems to them that it is just part of their job.

The minister, the CEO and the Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service need to thoroughly investigate the concerns of their own staff and begin a review of the practices at Robina Hospital mental health unit as a matter of urgency. Of great concern is patients either going AWOL or on approved day leave without supervision when they potentially pose a very real threat to public safety including commuters using Robina train station; staff, students and families at Robina State High School; and shoppers at Robina Town Centre. This facility is not an appropriate facility to house these types of patients, and the minister needs to act urgently on the matter.