



Speech By  
**Ros Bates**


**MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA**

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Record of Proceedings, 1 May 2018

**MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

**Health System**

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (2.35 pm): Queenslanders deserve a world-class health system that Labor is not delivering. Under this Labor government our public health system is lurching back to the bad old days and we have a health minister who cannot even run his own office. Ambulance ramping is increasing, our emergency departments are overloaded and elective surgery waiting times are blowing out once again. Promised infrastructure upgrades are years away and it seems that regional Queenslanders are treated like second-class citizens. That is all because this health minister puts politics before patients.

Everything that goes wrong is always someone else's fault and Queenslanders are fed up with the blame game. On the ground the story being told is one of clear incompetence and a lack of leadership. It is clear that, in Cairns and Townsville, Labor is not doing enough to protect our front-line health workers. In the past two years under Labor, at the Townsville Hospital violent assaults against our hardworking nurses and doctors have increased by over 22 per cent. I was shocked to hear some of the stories from our doctors, nurses and ambulance officers who regularly face assault while doing their jobs. When in government the LNP increased penalties for serious assaults on hospital staff from seven to 14 years, but this soft-on-crime Palaszczuk government needs to enforce those laws and provide hospital staff with the protection that they deserve.

I have seen that the Rockhampton Base Hospital is under strain because of a lazy Labor government. At the Rocky hospital, 20 per cent of ED patients are not being seen within clinically recommended time frames and 16 per cent of patients are left on an ambulance stretcher for 30 minutes or longer. Under Labor, we have a Minister for Health who is more interested in picking fights with Canberra than actually delivering health and hospital services for Queenslanders. This minister is too busy taking his riding instructions from Beth Mohle and the QNMU.

When emergency department waiting times blow out, Labor blames patients or the flu season. Six months later the minister is still blaming last year's flu season for the ramping that is happening today. Already he is blaming the next flu season, which is not due to start until next month.

The minister is blaming our vulnerable family members in aged care for being 'dumped' in hospitals for supposedly unnecessary procedures. That is an insult to all our grandmothers and grandfathers residing in Queensland nursing homes. For years those people have paid their dues in Medicare levies and they do have a right to access our public hospital system when they need to. To trivialise catheter changes or dressings shows that the minister has no clue about the complications that can and do arise for elderly patients when infections occur.

This minister has absolutely no idea. He blames the cost of GP services at a time when recent Medicare data showed bulk-billing rates at record-high levels. Despite the fact that Queensland Health runs Queensland public hospitals, if you ask this minister anything that goes wrong is always the fault

of the Commonwealth. A lot of mistruths have been told around the state by the minister, but the fact is that Commonwealth funding continues to grow at a rate faster than what the state is providing. In fact, Queensland is now one of only two states that has not signed up to the record new national partnership agreement that will deliver more than \$27 billion for the Queensland public health system over the next five-year agreement to 2024-25. That will deliver more nurses, doctors and paramedics for Queensland hospitals.

When it comes to health and Labor, they cannot be trusted because they will say anything and do anything to get elected and cover up for their own incompetence. We know that this minister, with his PhD in union recruitment, does not know the first thing about our health and hospital system. Queensland patients should have confidence when they show up at an emergency department that they will be seen and will be treated, and will be treated on time. Labor just cannot get the basics right.

Labor's litany of failures speaks for itself. Queenslanders have not forgotten Labor's fake Tahitian prince. They have not forgotten Labor's \$1.25 billion Health payroll debacle. They have not forgotten Dr Jayant Patel. They have not forgotten Anna Bligh writing off Queensland Health as a basket case. They will not forget the failures of this minister or the previous minister—failures like opening up our hospitals to 'Dr Love' and 'Dr Google'; a minister who cannot run his office and cannot send a letter.

When will this minister finally take responsibility for his own mismanagement of the health system in Queensland and own up to his mistakes? When will he keep Health staff safe from violent assaults? When will he stop blaming patients—

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Whiting): Order! Member, resume your seat for a moment. I ask members to direct their remarks through the chair.

**Ms BATES:** When will this minister and the previous minister keep Health staff safe from violent assaults? When will he stop blaming patients for getting sick? When will he give our front-line Health staff the resources and the funding that they need? 'Dr Dolittle' should hang his head in shame.