




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA

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MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Health System

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (2.25 pm): The health priorities of the Palaszczuk Labor government are all wrong, and there is no greater example than the debacle we have seen over renaming the Lady Cilento Children's Hospital. What an absolute unmitigated disaster it has been from day one. The treatment of the Cilento family by the Premier and her clueless health minister has been nothing short of heartless and utterly disrespectful.

When the consultation process was first announced, the Cilento family first heard about it on the radio that morning. When the final decision was made, the minister had never even met with or spoken to the family and made this excuse on 21 September: 'I don't have that personal relationship with them; the person who contacted them does.' Everyone has had enough of this minister and his dog-ate-my-homework excuses. Queenslanders want Labor to be focused on better patient care. Improving the services provided to our sickest kids should be the priority, not wasting taxpayers' money renaming children's hospitals.

Last weekend the *Sunday Mail* featured an open letter to the Queensland Premier entitled 'Save the Lady Cilento Children's Hospital', a copy of which I table.

Tabled paper: Document, dated November 2018, titled 'Save the Lady Cilento Children's Hospital—Open letter to the Queensland Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk' [1871](#).

It was a heartfelt plea to the Premier to listen to the people of Queensland and put patient care before politics. I want to read some key extracts from the letter into Hansard because they well articulate the issue at hand. The letter states—

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's decision.

The letter goes on to detail the legacy of Lady Phyllis Cilento, a legacy which should be respected and celebrated, not torn down and admonished. The letter finishes by stating—

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 of 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.

Queenslanders deserve better, as does the Cilento family. They deserve a health minister who puts patient care as his No. 1 priority, not silly political games that waste taxpayers' money. They deserve a Premier who listens and acts when wrong decisions are made, and it is not too late for the Premier to act. How much is this debacle going to cost the taxpayers of Queensland? It is money that should be put into improving the health care of our sickest kids. It is money that could be put into restoring important maternity services in Theodore and following on from the debacle we saw in Chinchilla that saw the hospital on maternity bypass for almost a year.

The Palaszczuk Labor government's health priorities are all wrong. Ambulance ramping continues to increase. Twenty-five per cent of all patients admitted to emergency departments are sitting in the back of ambulances for longer than the recommended time frame of 30 minutes. Our emergency departments are overcrowded. Twenty-eight per cent of all patients admitted to emergency departments are not being seen within clinically recommended time frames. Elective surgery wait times are blowing out. Almost five per cent of statewide elective surgeries are not done on time, and the medium wait time for treatment of 36 days continues to increase.

Instead, this health minister is wasting money focused on changing the name of one of our major children's hospitals. It just goes to show how arrogant and out of touch he is, and he clearly is not up to the job of administering Queensland's biggest public service—our \$17.3 billion health system. Queenslanders deserve a world-class public health system but the Palaszczuk government is not delivering. Labor's priorities are all wrong.