




Speech By
Joan Pease

MEMBER FOR LYTTON

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HEALTH TRANSPARENCY BILL

 **Ms PEASE** (Lytton—ALP) (6.15 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Health Transparency Bill 2019. Like my colleague the member for Caloundra said, it would be lovely to keep politics out of this important debate. Unfortunately, not all of those on that side of the debate listened and have displayed that sense of integrity.

The member for Mudgeeraba had the audacity to stand up and talk about how valuable they consider the elderly in their community to be and how important it is that we look after them. Can I just take the opportunity to remind the members here tonight and also the rest of the community of the appalling way they treated health workers including during the doctors dispute but, most importantly, what they did to the elderly in my community. At Moreton Bay Nursing Care Unit 85 residents lost their home that day when, with the stroke of a pen, the current Leader of the Opposition sat at the table and decided that it was appropriate that a fully functioning and operating Moreton Bay Nursing Care Unit could be closed. Where was the integrity there?

Mr Crandon: What happened to you wanting to keep politics out of it?

Ms PEASE: I will take that interjection from the member for Coomera because I am reflecting on the fact that your people on that side of the House—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stewart): Through the chair, please.

Ms PEASE: Through the chair, I say to the member for Coomera that the member for Caloundra has indicated that we keep politics out of it. However, no-one else has. The member for Mudgeeraba got up and had a go at everyone and I am responding to that.

Mr Crandon: What about you?

Ms PEASE: Where was your level of integrity, member for Mudgeeraba?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Through the chair, please, member for Lytton.

Ms PEASE: I would like to remind everyone of the harrowing videos that we have seen of the treatment of residents in some of the aged-care facilities across Australia. In common with many others, they will stay with me forever. Australians watched in horror as vulnerable aged-care residents were abused by those charged with caring for them. Let us not forget those vulnerable residents who were used as a corporate pawn in the recent Earle Haven debacle.

We can do so much better than this. It is time and it is timely that this bill is before the House. The main purpose of the bill is to improve transparency in public and private health facilities and in residential aged-care facilities; and to amend the Health Ombudsman Act in order to improve the operation and efficiency of the health complaints system. The bill sets out to establish a legislative framework for collecting and publishing information about public and private hospitals and residential aged-care facilities on a transparent website being developed by Queensland Health.

The bill will also amend the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011 to introduce a minimum nurse and support worker skill mix ratio and minimum average daily resident care hours in public residential aged-care facilities. The bill will also amend the Health Ombudsman Act 2013 to implement the recommendations of the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee's inquiry into the performance of the Health Ombudsman's functions pursuant to section 179 of the Health Ombudsman Act.

International research indicates that transparency of health service information leads to better quality care and outcomes. Queenslanders presently do not have easy access to information about public and private health services or aged-care facilities. This bill will enable consumers to make informed choices through being able to easily access and compare different providers. Consumers will have access to open, current and relevant important information published about providers. This visibility will encourage providers to be competitive and accountable, ultimately leading to a better health system for Queenslanders.

A new Queensland Health website will be developed to improve the transparency of the health and aged-care sectors in Queensland. The website, co-designed with consumers, will be an easy way to access information about health and residential aged-care facilities that is up to date, informative and Queensland focused. This website will provide a single point of reference for consumers to view and compare information about public and private hospitals, health facilities and residential aged-care facilities. This website will help consumers make informed decisions about their health care and the care of their beloved elders and will also contribute to important health literacy.

Public health facilities, including all public hospitals, and private health facilities, including day hospitals and private hospitals, will be required to provide general information and quality and safety information. Quality and safety information includes information about the facility's accreditation statement, information about activity performed by that service, access to care information and, importantly, information on patient outcomes. It will also include information about waiting time for surgeries and outpatients as well as things like infection management and hygiene practices. The types of quality and safety information able to be required from health facilities can and will be expanded by regulation. This will provide flexibility to expand the available information over time.

The bill also allows Queensland Health to request and publish information from both public and private healthcare facilities about staffing levels. Contextual information will also be provided to help consumers understand how staffing ratios impact and relate to quality of care. Private aged-care facilities will be able to opt out of providing information for the website. If an aged-care facility chooses not to provide information, it must indicate in writing to the department its decision to opt out, and this will be published on the new transparency website.

This bill will require residential aged-care facilities operated by Queensland Health to maintain a minimum nurse and support worker skill percentage and also to provide a minimum average number of care hours to residents on a daily basis. I am optimistic that private providers will follow our lead on this, given their terrible track record to date.

I acknowledge the secretariat of the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee who did an amazing job assisting the committee in its deliberations during what has been a particularly busy time for the committee. I also thank the department for its briefing and acknowledge my fellow committee members.

As I said at the start, it is timely that this bill is introduced. I wish that we did live in a world where everyone did the right thing—a world where we took care of our vulnerable and elderly because it is the right thing to do, a world where we do not provide just the bare minimum, and a world that is not ruled by the mighty dollar. Our elders have worked hard to provide for their families, our economy and our state. We cannot keep letting them down. They deserve so much better. With this bill, we will have relevant information about public and private health facilities and, importantly, residential aged-care facilities so that we can make informed decisions about our beloved elders who have contributed so much to our lives. I commend the bill to the House.