



Speech By  
**Ros Bates**


**MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA**

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Record of Proceedings, 26 February 2019

**MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

**Health System**

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (2.43 pm): The LNP believes Queenslanders deserve a world-class public health system. This includes ensuring that our hospitals are well equipped to deal with a growing and ageing population, that regional Queenslanders have access to quality health services and that our allied health professionals—our doctors, nurses, midwives and paramedics—have the support they need. As a former hospital administrator and a current registered nurse, this is one of my main priorities. Unfortunately, like every profession there is always a very small minority who do the wrong thing. When that happens in the health profession, the consequences can be dire as we have seen with high-profile cases in the past.

Over recent weeks I have been contacted by medical professionals who have raised concerns about the professional and clinical conduct of a senior general and laparoscopic surgeon. He currently operates at both public and private hospitals on the north side of Brisbane in Metro North HHS. The issues relate to allegations of sexual harassment, sexual misconduct and reasonable grounds to support the belief he has practised the profession of medicine and surgery in a way that constitutes a significant departure from accepted professional standards, placing the public at risk of harm.

From the information we have received, these allegations go back to 2016. I say 'allegations' because they are claims—many claims—from various senior medical professionals. They claim that he is a rogue surgeon placing surgical trainees and patients at risk. They have taken the extraordinary step of speaking out and they want me to speak out because they are sick of nothing being done. These are some of the reported concerns that we have received, and I table a number of these issues for the public record.

*Tabled paper:* Bundle of correspondence detailing allegations against Dr William Braun [249](#).

This is the first case—

In one case of a patient that presented to the Princess Alexandra Hospital days following elective Sleeve Gastrectomy surgery for obesity, it appeared that the patient suffered a post-operative haemorrhage and subsequent leak directly as a result of surgical technique. This was then followed by a failure to diagnose the complication and manage it accordingly ... a departure from acceptable professional standards.

The second case involves a different issue being reported in relation to professional misconduct—

My other great concern ... is in regard to his engagement in sexual misconduct in connection with the practice of his profession as a doctor and surgeon directed towards female staff members, including nurses, junior medical staff and female medical equipment company representatives. In the last 48 hours, I have been made aware of numerous examples of ... making inappropriate sexual remarks, touching female staff members inappropriately, engaging in sexual behaviours in front of female staff members in an operating theatre, and attempting to use his power as a Consultant General Surgeon to coerce female staff members into sexual favours in exchange for various rewards.

### The same medical practitioner continues—

I have also been informed that allegations of sexual misconduct ... are common knowledge amongst female General Surgical Trainees in Brisbane and Queensland and are well known ... As a result of his alleged sexual misconduct towards junior female surgical doctors, Queensland Health and The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons Queensland Surgical Training Board have not permitted junior female doctors to undergo General Surgical Training at Queensland Health's Redcliffe Hospital where (the doctor) is employed for fear of exposing any more female junior Surgical Trainees to his sexual misconduct, yet he continues to practice there.

There is thus an acknowledgement of a problem of sexual misconduct by a powerful General Surgical Consultant at Redcliffe Public Hospital towards less powerful inexperienced junior female Surgical Trainees without obvious resolution of this serious problem thus far.

### The third case I want to highlight is in relation to the discomfort witnessed on a daily basis from women in the workplace—

His interaction with women is not professional, he is well known amongst female trainees and nurses as having highly inappropriate behaviour. I would not entrust him with the care of any of my relatives or people I care about.

They are not my words: they are the words of senior medical professionals who are tired of inaction and who are speaking out. Senior clinicians have raised concerns for years and trainee doctors are speaking out, but the situation seems to have been managed, not dealt with. Today I have written to AHPRA and the Office of the Health Ombudsman with these concerns. I am also calling on the health minister to ensure that these and all other claims are thoroughly investigated by Metro North HHS's integrity unit. I have written to the health minister and Ramsay Health Care to that effect as well. I am asking for a full and thorough investigation into these allegations. Something has to be done. This has dragged on for far too long. It does not matter who you are or what you do. Bad behaviour should never be tolerated.