




Speech By
Ros Bates

MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA

Record of Proceedings, 26 March 2019

MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Braun, Dr W

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (2.46 pm): I rise to update the House on an important matter of public interest. One month ago today I rose in this House to raise some very serious allegations against a senior Queensland surgeon, Dr William Braun. These allegations had been provided to us in the lead-up to that sitting week. They were brought to our attention by a number of senior doctors who had been raising these and similar issues about the professional and clinical conduct of Dr Braun for years.

These doctors were frustrated at the lack of any recognition of their concerns. They were fed up, and rightly so. The numerous and varied complaints raised had seemingly fallen on deaf ears. In some cases issues had been brought to the attention of health authorities several years ago. Complaints were either ignored or investigated and dismissed. We understand that two of the senior doctors who were on the review of the Dr Patel saga are of the opinion that Braun is potentially worse than Patel.

I am pleased to say that within 48 hours of that speech, Dr Braun had been suspended from clinical practice in both Queensland public and private hospitals. The response to my speech was fairly swift, but it begs the question why it had to come to this. The matter is not over and there are many unanswered questions. Dr Braun is under investigation and I will not prejudge the outcome of that investigation. However, since I spoke about these issues there have been many more complaints from around the country from other doctors and patients. These are everyday Australians who have been treated appallingly.

I want to reassure Queenslanders that by far the vast majority of health professionals act honourably and ethically at all times. The actions of a few bad apples should not undermine confidence in our health system, but it also should not be forgotten that clinical mistakes can permanently scar patients and cost lives.

The fact that these complaints were not acted upon until I raised them in a public forum such as parliament raises other serious questions about the system. In recent weeks we were alerted to the fact that Dr Braun was a flight risk, given his personal and professional links to Russia and that region. On Friday, 1 March I wrote to the Premier with these concerns and made her aware of the possibility that he may flee the country.

As I said, further cases have emerged in the last couple of weeks. In one case a woman told us—

I had surgery under him in December 2017 and he has performed surgery that I had not 'approved'. This went to the Australian Health Practitioner Regulator and due to documents, he had clearly made up (and had colleagues sign witness statements), AHPRA found in his favour and he had done nothing wrong. I had no documentation to prove otherwise and still have a \$7000 bill outstanding as a result of his 'error'.

As a result of feeling threatened by him, I had no post-operative care or support since the day I asked why they made the mistake, which in my eyes is also malpractice.

In another case, dating back to 2017, we were told—

I was admitted to NW Hospital by William Braun for a hernia operation. The next day I was discharged. That night I contracted severe abdominal pain. The next day ... after the hospital checked with Braun that I could be re-admitted I was re-admitted to NW Hospital and allowed to languish there unattended by Braun, I did see a house doctor, but no tests were arranged ... A different house doctor decided to do a blood test. A CT scan was conducted and after that I was urgently transferred to Redcliffe hospital for emergency surgery and an operation was performed which saved my life. I had contracted very serious septicaemia. I never saw Braun at all until the Redcliffe hospital and then only twice. On the first occasion ... he made an offensive and uncalled for comment to my wife (in front of me) "at least he didn't die".

I understand that this matter is now before the Health Ombudsman. Two other former patients both contacted us with concerns about their clinical treatment. In both cases there was a concern that the patients nearly died. One patient told me that she felt blamed and that throughout her treatment she felt intimidated. For the benefit of the House and the public, I table additional de-identified documents received in the last few weeks.

Tabled paper: Bundle of correspondence regarding Dr William Braun [406](#).

I want to reassure those who have contacted me that we will be monitoring the investigation very closely. All allegations have been referred to the relevant authorities. I am calling on health authorities to be open and transparent and to make sure this is a priority. As I said in my previous speech, Queenslanders deserve a world-class health system with patient care and safety as the priority.