



Speech By  
**Ros Bates**


**MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA**

---

Record of Proceedings, 2 April 2019

**MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

**Braun, Dr W**

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (2.45 pm): Last week I updated the House about a significant issue of public interest in the health system. I also tabled correspondence from the Royal Darwin Hospital in 2006 to the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, which raised serious concerns including—

All permanent consultant surgeons and seniors in the Department of Anaesthetics and E.D. are sufficiently concerned about his behaviour as documented above to formally notify the Medical Board that he was possibly a danger to the public.

...

In particular it is his inability to show any insight into his own behaviour which makes him a potentially dangerous medical practitioner.

It is fair to say that we have been inundated with more and more issues about the conduct of Dr Braun from former and current patients as well as other doctors over many years. I am pleased that action from both Ramsay and Queensland Health in removing Dr Braun's clinical privileges while he is under investigation has finally happened. While it has taken far too long for something to be done, at least it seems these allegations are finally being taken seriously. It does, however, beg the question whether anyone within Queensland Health knew about these issues before I raised them in February.

Last week we were contacted by a former patient of Dr Braun who wants to remain anonymous. The patient did, however, provide documents, which I table for the benefit of all members and the public, about serious allegations raised against Dr Braun with the former minister for health Cameron Dick in 2017 and the current Minister for Health, Steven Miles, in 2018.

*Tabled paper:* Bundle of correspondence relating to complaints regarding Dr William Braun [500](#).

These complaints that were sent to ministers would also have been alerted to Queensland Health and yet, despite that, Dr Braun continued to practise medicine in Queensland and perform surgeries right up until the scandal broke in February this year. On 2 July last year the patient wrote to the current health minister to outline his frustrations about the continual bureaucratic buck-passing of his concerns. Once again, it highlights significant flaws in the system that has failed to protect patients.

When the former minister for health Lawrence Springborg introduced the Health Ombudsman Bill in June 2013 he said—

... on 16 April 2013, a public interest disclosure about the conduct, regulation, registration and discipline of medical practitioners in Queensland and three subsequent reports arising out of those initial allegations do not instil public confidence in the way in which complaints about health services and providers are managed in this state.

He went on to say that the Health Ombudsman's functions include dealing with systemic health service issues and receiving complaints and taking action to deal with them under the act. These sweeping changes were needed after systemic failures were missed in a number of cases—the most high profile being Patel. Key outcomes of the bill also included strengthening the way in which serious

allegations against registered health practitioners are managed in Queensland and enabling immediate action to be taken to suspend or place conditions on registration where there is a serious risk to the public. In the case of Dr Braun, this did not happen.

Private hospital operators across the country need to ensure Dr Braun is not given any clinical privileges until all current investigations are finalised. I am calling on the Minister for Health to explain to Queenslanders what action he took in relation to complaints he had previously received about Dr Braun. In doing so, the minister needs to outline what action he is taking to ensure the Health Ombudsman is actually doing the job it was designed to do. He also should be ensuring that AHPRA is doing the job it is supposed to do. Its website includes examples that AHPRA can consider, including concerns that a practitioner is working or providing patient care in an unsafe way such as serious or repeated mistakes in carrying out procedures, in diagnosis or in prescribing medications for a patient; a failure to examine a patient properly or to respond reasonably to a patient's needs; and serious concerns about the practitioner's skill, knowledge or judgement in their profession. AHPRA can also look at concerns about the way a practitioner behaves, including acts of violence, sexual assault or indecency, or any other behaviour that is inconsistent with the practitioner being fit and proper to be a registered health practitioner.

Queenslanders deserve to have confidence in our public health system. By far the majority of health practitioners do the right thing, but we cannot let a few bad apples of the ilk of Dr Braun undermine confidence in the profession. The minister needs to stop putting politics ahead of patient care and do his job. The buck stops with this minister.