




Speech By
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MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Public Hospitals, Performance Targets

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (2.36 pm): Famous US self-help business guru W Clement Stone once said, 'Aim for the moon. If you miss, you may hit a star.' Having performance targets drives better performance. In this case, I refer to the administration of our public hospitals and providing world-class patient care to sick and injured Queenslanders. The latest annual reports released late last month revealed that the Palaszczuk Labor government has scrapped benchmark wait-time targets for hospitals across the state. These are the waiting time targets for patients in our emergency departments and surgery waiting times. As it was reported in the media on Friday, 27 September, 'Queensland Hospitals are failing to meet their own benchmarks to see emergency patients in time.'

When you look at the annual reports across the 16 hospital and health services, you can see why the targets have been scrapped. Only one of the 16 hospital and health services made their elective surgery wait-time target in 2018-19 and that was the Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Service, which I actually visited a fortnight ago. With a target of 25 days for median wait time for elective surgery, some of the performance for 2018-19 speaks for itself. It is the record of wait times blowing out under the Palaszczuk Labor government. In Central West HHS, the median wait time for elective surgery was 97 days, bearing in mind the target was 25 days. For the Children's Hospital, it was 62 days; in Central Queensland, it was 59 days; in South West, it was 55 days; in the Gold Coast, it was 49 days; on the Sunshine Coast, it was 45 days; in West Moreton, it was 44 days; in Townsville, it was 41 days; in Metro North, it was 36 days; and in Metro South, it was 33 days.

Surgery wait times have blown out and, instead of fixing the issue and doing what was promised, the Palaszczuk Labor government has scrapped the performance targets—hoping that no-one would ever see or know about it. Labor is effectively abandoning our public health system. Scrapping performance targets is actually giving up. It means the Palaszczuk Labor government is giving up on delivering a world-class public health system for Queenslanders. It means the Palaszczuk Labor government is giving up on providing our hardworking frontline nurses, doctors, midwives and paramedics with the help they need to improve patient care. It means the Palaszczuk Labor government is giving up on its election promises to provide better health services. If the Premier is true to her word about providing better health services, she needs to reverse this decision and reinstate performance targets for our hospitals.

It goes to priorities and running an accountable public health system that strives to provide better patient care. We all know that Labor has the wrong priorities when it comes to health services, and this is just another example. Hundreds of millions of dollars have been wasted on failed IT health projects, be it the integrated electronic Medical Record rollout, replacing the old FAMMIS ordering system or the latest debacle in Cairns, where a multimillion dollar eHealth program rolled out in the Far North has ground to a halt two years on amid technical glitches and the original supplier being dumped. It is clear that Labor has learned nothing from the Health payroll debacle almost a decade on. Thousands of

nurses are still being harassed. Labor's record on health includes: emergency departments at breaking points, skyrocketing ambulance ramping, surgery wait times blowing out, a bush baby crisis, health IT bungle after bungle and, on top of all of that, wasting money on changing the names of hospitals rather than providing better patient care to our sickest kids.

Unlike Labor, the LNP puts patient care as its No. 1 priority. The LNP will refocus our public health system on patient outcomes and ensure that better health services are provided to Queenslanders. We will restore performance targets. We will partner with the private sector to slash waiting lists and ensure elective surgeries are completed in clinically recommended times.

While speaking of Labor's performance on health services, I also want to touch on ambulance ramping data for August, which are some of the worst numbers on record. As the *Gold Coast Bulletin* reported earlier today, ambulance ramping has more than doubled under the Palaszczuk Labor government, with the Gold Coast remaining one of the worst in Labor's latest health crisis. In August, 32 per cent of patients were ramped in ambulances for longer than 30 minutes while waiting to get into overcrowded emergency departments. That is almost one-third of all Queensland patients admitted for emergency care. To put that into context, those numbers have more than doubled since the Palaszczuk government was elected in 2015. It is another horror health story.

Labor's health crisis impacts on patient care and puts pressure on the hardworking nurses and paramedics who are trying to manage under severe pressure. It does not help when the Palaszczuk Labor government cuts the hospital building budget by \$203 million this year, with promised hospital upgrades years away from completion. When it comes to providing better health services for Queenslanders, you cannot trust the Palaszczuk Labor government.