



Speech By  
**Ros Bates**


**MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA**

---

Record of Proceedings, 22 October 2019

**MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

**Health System**

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (2.36 pm): When Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk was elected in 2015 she promised openness, integrity and accountability to the people of Queensland. What we have seen is anything but that commitment and in reality what can only be described as just a token commitment to transparency—all talk and no action. We have seen ministers doing government business via email, we have seen secret reports buried when it is bad news the government does not want Queenslanders to know about, we have seen the Premier's chief of staff leave his role under a CCC assessment of a taxpayer funded grant to a company he was a shareholder in and, of course, who could forget the Deputy Premier's integrity scandal this year which led to a damning report by the CCC, including recommendations for the creation of new criminal offences?

In relation to health services, the biggest portfolio in the government, we have a minister who is fast becoming the king of cover-ups. In the last two days, I have sent two letters to the Speaker about the Minister for Health failing to answer questions on notice about health failures that he is responsible for. These are questions that are critical to the operation of a transparent government which is open to scrutiny.

The rollout of the integrated electronic Medical Record under eHealth Queensland is the biggest IT project since Labor's Health payroll debacle a decade ago, but it is fast becoming just as bad. We have seen doctors speak out, concerned about the impact on patient safety. We have seen the former CEO leave the role under a CCC investigation. We have seen a \$256 million blowout and a scathing Auditor-General report. We have seen critical system failures that have caused chaos in our hospitals.

As a nurse, I feel for our hardworking nurses, doctors and midwives who have to put up with Labor's latest IT debacle while trying to provide world-class care for our patients. As the media reported in September, the ieMR crashed at 14 hospitals across the state for three hours, with nurses having to scramble and use paper charts amongst the chaos. Sadly, this was yet another bungle in a long series of issues with the failed rollout of this project. Impacted hospitals included the Lady Cilento, or Queensland Children's Hospital as it is better known nowadays, the Princess Alexandra Hospital and QEII Hospital and the Logan, Redland, Ipswich, Gold Coast University, Sunshine Coast University and Townsville hospitals. As the media reported at the time—

One source at Redland Hospital said patients could not be properly triaged at emergency, there were delays identifying Category One and Two patients and wait times were blown out as doctors were forced to order scans through slower manual processes.

...

'It's chaos here in ED. So unsafe,' the source said ... 'We don't know where the patients are located or who is looking after who.'

At the time, Queensland Health refused to answer questions on how a scheduled 'planned vendor upgrade' managed to take out the network for three hours, nor whether any investigation has been launched to ensure it does not happen again. Things are that bad that the rollout to other hospitals in

Metro North and the Darling Downs hospital and health services, including the Prince Charles Hospital and Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, has been delayed until 2021 following a damning Queensland Audit Office report released late last year.

While the Premier ordered an investigation following that incident, Queenslanders are none the wiser to what happened, why it happened and what the Palaszczuk Labor government are doing to ensure it does not happen again, safeguarding patient care. On 18 September I asked the minister to answer important questions about the failure and the investigation announced by the Premier including (a) the cost of fixing the failure, (b) the terms of reference for the investigation, (c) the budget for the investigation, (d) the date when the investigation will report and (e) a list of hospitals impacted by the critical failure. In response the minister referred me to an answer to another question asked which said—

The investigation found the technical root cause of the issue was that the maximum number of connections configured in the MQ Series Max channel was reached. The vendor, Cerner has now increased the max channel threshold and will provide advice to Queensland Health regarding any other configuration thresholds that may now need to be changed.

In what can only be described as a Monty Python moment from the minister, he stated that the failure on 10 September impacted only those hospitals where the program was rolled out. Well, what a revelation! A digital hospital failure only impacted the hospital where the digital program had been rolled out. What a relief! This would be funny if the issue was not so serious.

I call on the health minister to release the investigation report. Otherwise, it is just another Palaszczuk Labor government cover-up. Taxpayers paid for these reports and they deserve to be able to see the outcome. They deserve a health minister who takes responsibility for his own failures. Queenslanders deserve a world-class health system, not more Labor digital disasters.