




Speech By  
**Hon. Dr Steven Miles**  
**MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA**

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Record of Proceedings, 28 March 2019

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Hospitals, Demand

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (9.41 am): I can advise that the House the planning, logistics, coordination and sheer hard work of our emergency department teams is delivering results. As at nine o'clock this morning, HHSs in the south-east corner are assessing their status, but I can confirm that five are now below bed capacity and some pressure remains.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order, members to my left!

**Dr MILES:** All hospitals have indicated they do not expect to reschedule any elective surgery today. Most have reported lower than expected emergency department presentations overnight, with the exception of the Redcliffe and Prince Charles hospitals where I visited this morning. While emergency departments often see pressure in winter, the system has never seen this kind of sustained increase in demand for hospitals across the south-east outside of the winter period.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Members will be warned immediately today, based on the behaviour in the House in the last two days.

**Dr MILES:** More than 25,000 South-East Queenslanders attended an emergency department in the first three weeks of March alone. The Palaszczuk government responded quickly when the issue escalated on Tuesday afternoon, allocating \$3 million for urgent capacity expansion. That was only one component of a structured, extensive, energetic response. For example, the Metro North team opened 46 beds across their facilities normally not used when treating emergency patients. A call went out for nurses off roster or on leave to provide extra shifts and they responded, with a number going from Prince Charles Hospital to Redcliffe and Caboolture hospitals to keep beds staffed. The HHS has some remaining capacity at a community facility in Zillmere, but this cannot currently be used due to a recent gastro outbreak. In Metro South, procedure rooms, transit beds and other physical space not ordinarily used for beds were open, with hospitals facing a situation where they were 50 patients over capacity. Some patients at Logan Hospital indicated a concern about being transferred to other hospitals inside the HHS because it may place them further away from their support network of family and friends. In response, to help free hospital capacity, the HHS approved extra travel subsidies to assist patients and their families. The dedicated team is working with the Mater, which is providing 30 beds at Mater South Brisbane, five beds at Mater Springfield and five beds at Mater Redland.

The Gold Coast also took clear action to help manage the demand. The HHS opened 43 beds across their facilities that are normally not used for treating emergency patients. Extra nurses were called in and negotiations were undertaken with both private hospitals on the coast and our colleagues in NSW who send critical patients from the Tweed to the Gold Coast. The hospital has also made contingency plans to move low-acuity patients to a local nursing home and free up hospital beds.

These are complex and coordinated responses to a complex problem, but one thing remains simple: the inspiring commitment of our hard working staff. While much of the focus yesterday was on the level of demand, our \$3 million commitment and the sparring that occurs here—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Member for Kawana, you are warned under the standing orders. I have asked that these statements, where they are not being provocative, be heard.

**Dr MILES:** While much of the focus yesterday was on the level of demand and the sparring that occurs here, can I draw the attention of the House to one simple act of health heroics. Members may be aware of a serious incident at the Australian Christian College in Caboolture yesterday where a car struck six people, including four students who were injured. I am advised that, thankfully, the students were all stable yesterday with no life-threatening injuries. Patients were transferred quickly and safely to the Queensland Children's Hospital, Redcliffe Hospital and Caboolture Hospital where they received world-class, expert care. Before that, amidst the chaos, the injuries and the damaged vehicles, helpers rushed to provide assistance, with one of the very first people on the scene being an off-duty nurse. On duty or off duty, whether in an emergency department, on a ward, in our allied health facilities, in a private facility or in the public system, that nurse, and the thousands of other expert clinicians, are everyday heroes doing heroic work every day. I would ask every member in this place to remember that and to thank our amazing and hardworking staff.