




Speech By
Joan Pease

MEMBER FOR LYTTON

Record of Proceedings, 16 July 2020

**HEALTH COMMUNITIES, DISABILITY SERVICES AND DOMESTIC AND FAMILY
VIOLENCE PREVENTION COMMITTEE**

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Ms PEASE** (Lytton—ALP) (3.07 pm): Whilst I would love to use up my time debunking the disgraceful comments by the member for Mudgeeraba—how dare she stand up here and say we were turning this into a political argument, which is exactly what she has done? I thought this was a debate about the atrocious behaviour at Earle Haven, not an opportunity to pick on the member for Gaven. Let me continue—

Opposition members interjected.

Ms PEASE: Each and every one of us in this House has a reason to be appalled. I am appalled by the member for Mudgeeraba, by the operators at Earle Haven and also by the federal government oversight body.

Opposition members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Pugh): Order!

Ms PEASE: May I say—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Lytton, member for Mudgeeraba, I was on my feet. Next time you will be warned.

Ms PEASE: On 11 July 2019, so just a little over a year ago, this appalling matter played out in the media for each and every one of us in this House to watch. The oldest and most vulnerable people in our communities were treated yet again to despicable behaviour over the almighty dollar. That is what it all actually boiled down to. It was a dispute between businessmen. Arthur Miller and HelpStreet should be absolutely ashamed of themselves for what they did. Arthur Miller decided he was on holidays and was unable to read to important documents that related to the matter of his licensing agreement.

It just amazes me that we come in here and the member for Mudgeeraba says that it cannot be political. She is turning it into something political. These are old, vulnerable people—they could be our grandparents, our parents, our aunts and our uncles. They deserve to be treated better. We should all hang our heads in shame that we let this happen. Do you know who let us down? It was the federal oversight body. That is who let us down. That organisation had been through a litany of disputes and problems for years. That is a fact and you all know it. There is no denying that. That is very clear. The federal oversight body is the one that let each and every one of those residents of Earle Haven down.

What I was so appalled by, if any of you have had the opportunity to listen to any of the hearings, was the recording of the nursing manager who called the ambulance. She was laughing. She was laughing as she called to say, 'Oh, there's something going on here. You better call some ambulances because we're shutting down the nursing home.' How disgraceful! Was it funny? It was not funny at all.

It is terrible. We need to make sure that this can never, ever happen again. I will make sure that it does not. I am not going to put up with it, and I know that everyone on my side of the House is equally appalled by this.

The federal government agency needs to stand up. They need to provide more funding for aged care to look after our elderly. These are people who have shaped our community and our economy. There have been systemic failures in the aged-care sector for years. That is because it is significantly underfunded by the federal government. The Leading Age Services Australia reported that there are approximately 200 aged-care facilities that were at an unacceptable risk of going broke.

One of the other things I would like to acknowledge is the great work of the nursing staff at Earle Haven. I agree with the member for Mudgeeraba: they certainly did step up. They stepped in. There was no way that that facility could continue to operate even with the great staff who were there providing that service because HelpStreet had gone about removing the computers and all medical records. They removed bedding. They removed facilities. There was no food for the aged-care residents. There was no capacity for those people to stay there.

The ambulance officers and paramedics who attended on that day did an outstanding job taking care of those residents, as did each and every one of those people in the emergency response team who looked after the aged-care residents. Without them, goodness knows what would have happened. All that matters is that we have to make sure that we do better. We can do it better. We are good people. As you can tell, I am appalled. I had a speech written, but I am speaking from the heart. I cannot believe in this day and age that this could happen to the vulnerable people in our community. If the member for Mudgeeraba wants to make it political, take it to Canberra and ask for more funding for the aged-care sector. That would be the best thing that you could do to take care of the aged-care sector.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Pugh): Order! Member, direct your comments through the chair.

Ms PEASE: The best thing that the member for Mudgeeraba could do is call on the federal government to support the aged-care sector, as I am doing. I call for extra funding for the aged-care sector to make sure that they look after the most vulnerable in our community. I also call on the oversight body to step up and do their job a little bit better.