




Speech By
Peter Russo
MEMBER FOR TOOHEY

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

QEII Hospital

 **Mr RUSSO** (Toohey—ALP) (2.53 pm): I rise today to speak about the QEII Hospital and staff and what they have been doing in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. I want to acknowledge and thank them. I also wish to acknowledge Karen Shepherd, a registered nurse and midwife who lives in my electorate and works at the Logan Hospital. Thank you for your contribution to the health of Queenslanders on the south side. As you would expect from a Queensland hospital, the staff rallied together and they have put in place strong measures to deal with COVID-19. This is an unprecedented time in history and they just got on with it. They repurposed the endoscopy suite so they could relocate the intensive care unit and increased the critical care capacity at the QEII Hospital from five to nine beds, giving them the potential to expand to 20 beds if it was ever required. People visiting the QEII Hospital may have noticed the closure of one of the outpatient departments. This allowed the hospital to create its own COVID-19 screening clinic. What is amazing is that from closure to the reopening of the screening clinic only took four hours! Three days later, the clinic was further extended by putting up temporary walls so they could increase the testing capacity of the clinic.

These repurposing challenges at the QEII required a tremendous effort from dozens of staff members, who all pitched in and worked together as a team. The increase in capacity of the clinic meant that since 10 May—only a couple of days ago—QEII has performed 2,535 COVID-19 tests. QEII's clinical response preparations included creating a negative pressure tent in the hospital's operating theatre. This was done just in case they needed to perform surgery on a patient with suspected or confirmed COVID-19. Elective surgeries reduced and have seamlessly been resumed; however, it did not stop there. QEII Hospital established a screening clinic call centre that has received thousands of inquiries. While staff working in the screening clinics may not wear masks or perform tests, they do an amazing job and have stayed up to date with the changes occurring to screening criteria.

The clinic at the QEII Hospital recently invited a photographer from Brisbane's State Library to visit them and to document how COVID-19 has changed hospitals across Queensland. The hospital staff and health workers readily adapted to the changes in their working conditions and have incorporated the use of telehealth and other virtual care options. I have been told that social distancing is now the new norm whether in staff meetings, forums or training. I thank the staff of the QEII Hospital.