




Speech By
Ros Bates

MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (2.06 pm): Putting politics ahead of the health care of Queenslanders is the ultimate act of betrayal. Last year, on 31 October, the health minister claimed that he knew nothing about new communications protocols relating to Labor's bungled rollout of the integrated electronic Medical Record. RTI documents reveal that Queensland Health staff were told not to perform important IT upgrades during parliamentary sitting weeks. This is a time when the Premier and minister might be asked questions and face scrutiny over the ongoing bumbles. The next day he told media that the order did not come from his office. As revealed last night, further secret government documents obtained by the LNP through right to information show that 10 days before the story went to air in October last year the minister not only knew what was happening but also the new communication protocols came from him.

The ministerial briefing note signed off by the CEO of eHealth Queensland, Damian Green, on 21 October 2019 shows that 'as requested by the minister ... eHealth Queensland is leading a range of initiatives to improve communication' protocol changes that are 'not critical to maintain services are also being postponed to non-parliament sitting weeks'.

The minister's latest dog-ate-my-homework excuse—that the briefing note was only a draft and he never saw it—completely misses the point. It does not matter whether he saw it or not. The point is that it refers to the fact that the minister directed the new communication protocols—the complete opposite of what he told Queenslanders on 31 October and 1 November last year.

The subject line of an email from the acting chief technology officer that attached the briefing note to the CEO of eHealth Queensland says everything Queenslanders need to know: 'Brief for DG and Minister—Progress on stopping own goals in ICT'. It should also be revealed that the same briefing note says—

In the last six to twelve months there has been additional media scrutiny on ICT systems and events that have impacted Queensland Health. This level of scrutiny now requires additional controls to minimise the reputational impacts.

It is great to see that the minister and senior Queensland Health executives are more concerned about reputational risk than the clinical care provided to sick and injured Queenslanders. What is clear from yet another major bungle from the health minister is that he has misled Queenslanders. He is more interested in protecting his own political hide than putting patient care first. Once again, like we saw with the renaming of the Lady Cilento children's hospital, it is the wrong priority. Wasting the time of senior executives with cover-ups is the wrong priority. They should be focused on fixing Labor's broken health system and ensuring hardworking nurses, doctors, midwives and paramedics get the support they need on the front line. The Premier needs to finally show leadership and sack the health minister. Her continual lack of action endorses his actions. The standard you walk past is the standard you accept. It is time for the health minister to go. This is the ultimate act of betrayal.