




Speech By
Ros Bates

MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Coronavirus, Aged-Care Facilities

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (2.32 pm): The people of Rockhampton and across Central Queensland are right to be angry at the mismanagement of a state government run aged-care centre in their community. Last Friday it was confirmed that a nurse at the North Rockhampton aged-care centre had tested positive to coronavirus, and it is believed the nurse was contagious for up to 12 days before that as well. Interestingly, that seemed to be revealed by a tweet from the member for Keppel not long after the Premier stood up in Brisbane for her daily media conference briefing on the coronavirus, yet there was no mention from the Premier of the major blunder. The Premier was quick to threaten to name and shame private operators a month ago but she was caught out by a bungle in her own backyard. It is a cop-out to blame the nurse who tested positive to coronavirus. This is a state government run centre and the new Deputy Premier and health minister needs to take full responsibility. The buck stops with him.

In September last year I called for more transparency to ensure Queensland had a world-class public aged-care system by widening the Earle Haven inquiry into all 16 state run aged-care homes. Once again these concerns fell on deaf ears. Our elderly Queenslanders are the most vulnerable to coronavirus, and the health and welfare of residents across all 16 state run homes must always be the priority. There are many questions that have been left unanswered. As Phil Tsingos, president of the Nurses' Professional Association of Queensland, said in the media—

Why is it that private hospitals are putting in scanners to check temperatures on the public and staff as they walk in, there's really strict measures, everyone gets questioned every day (about possible symptoms), yet a state-run facility like this has had none of that?

These are the questions that Queenslanders deserve to know the answers to. Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk clearly has no idea what is happening in aged-care facilities operated by her own government. Either the proper procedures were not in place or they were not followed. It is reassuring that there has been no other positive cases stemming from the Rockhampton aged-care breach, but that seems to be down to good luck rather than good management. I feel for the local residents of the home and their families as well as the nurses and staff at the state government run aged-care facilities. Their health and wellbeing was unnecessarily put at risk thanks to this major breach.

They also deserve an independent investigation, and I call on the new Deputy Premier to make all reports into this breach public—in fact, they should all be tabled in the parliament. The new Deputy Premier should also guarantee the safety of aged-care residents and staff at the other 15 state government run aged-care homes across Queensland. While he is at it, the Deputy Premier also needs to apologise to the residents, their families and the staff at the centre for the major breach. Saying sorry is the least he can do.