



Speech By  
**Amy MacMahon**


**MEMBER FOR SOUTH BRISBANE**

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Record of Proceedings, 14 October 2021

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENT**

**Health System, Funding**

 **Dr MacMAHON** (South Brisbane—Grn) (2.42 pm): For months healthcare workers have been warning of a crisis in Queensland's hospitals. Our hospitals are already operating at 100 per cent capacity, and that is before the likely spike in COVID cases when Queensland opens. We urgently need to get vaccination rates up, especially in First Nations communities and for people living with disability. Crucially, we need to properly fund our hospital system to do its work. As we get closer to the state opening up, over the past month my office has been hearing from nurses and healthcare workers on the front line of our public hospitals who are raising the alarm. One said—

For God's sake find a way to increase the bed and staff numbers at the RBWH and don't put it all back on staff by saying we need to be more productive. No-one says that to politicians!

Another said—

Staff are leaving, some roles aren't being replaced. Nurses and doctors are doing the job of 2 people. Service delivery doesn't change despite the reduced workforce numbers. The highest level of burnout I've seen in 30 years.

Another said—

Ambulance ramping every day—speaks for itself. There are no beds to offload patients into, patients that require monitoring are being offloaded early which is unsafe.

In a state as wealthy as Queensland, it is criminal that we have a shortage of beds and staff in our public hospitals. I am in no way opposed to having both the federal and state governments invest more in our public hospitals, but our hospitals cannot wait while the political blame game between the feds and the state plays out. The state government can, and should, act now. We need to urgently commit to a massive funding boost to our public hospitals to cope with the looming surge of COVID patients. Our hospitals desperately need more beds, nurses, doctors and other frontline staff.

If our government is concerned about how they could pay for this, it is time to make the wealthiest companies pay just a little bit more. The Commonwealth Bank reported a profit of \$8.8 billion over the last financial year, with the other four banks not far behind. The banks are riding on a wave of profit as property investors rush to Queensland in the wake of COVID. There is nothing stopping the state government from implementing a levy on the big banks. Queensland's Mid Year Fiscal and Economic Review is coming up in the next few months. We should update the budget to include this new revenue and expenditure to give Queenslanders the public health system we need to be prepared for the coming influx from COVID-19.