



Speech By  
**Brent Mickelberg**


**MEMBER FOR BUDERIM**

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## **MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

### **Health System, Data**

 **Mr MICKELBERG** (Buderim—LNP) (2.47 pm): Today we see the latest Queensland Audit Office report which draws the focus to the state government's failure to provide timely health care for Queenslanders. The latest independent report addresses the importance of open data in tackling challenges like underperforming hospitals. It is an important report that highlights the state government's failure to accurately measure and share important hospital performance data which, if shared in a timely and transparent manner, would shine a light on the crisis of care that exists in Queensland's hospitals. Queenslanders want to know that when they go to their local hospital they will get the treatment they need when they need it. Right now too many Queenslanders are not getting the care they need when they need it.

Over recent months we have heard countless stories of Queenslanders suffering unnecessarily as they wait for surgery and of Queenslanders dying because they did not get the emergency care they needed when they needed it. Too often when those stories have been told, the government's response has been to dismiss them. The Premier and her ministers have dismissed them because they are politically inconvenient. However, every time ministers and the Premier dismiss the cries for help from everyday Queenslanders, they are telling Queenslanders they do not really care.

It shows that they do not care about Queenslanders like Judith Hamilton who, in insufferable pain and suffering from a suspected case of sepsis, waited 9½ hours for an ambulance to arrive. Despite the fact that she lived one block from the ambulance station, an ambulance arrived more than nine hours after the first call for help but it was too late. It was reported that the Queensland Ambulance Service said that Judith's case should have been escalated and that there were staff shortages and delays at hospitals. Judith and her family deserved better.

Bob Neich's wife of 50 years, Janelle, suffered a serious fall at her nursing home. Bleeding and unable to be moved, Janelle waited for more than six hours, suffering unnecessarily before passing away days later. Although Janelle was already seriously ill, Bob feels that the delay sped things up and he lost precious days with his wife that they would never get back.

Judith and Janelle are just two of the many thousands of Queenslanders that hospital performance data represents. Dismissing the need for timely, transparent and accurate hospital performance data will only result in more Queenslanders who cannot get the care they need in their hour of need.

It is easy to dismiss the importance of data but, in government, that which you do not measure cannot be fixed. In the report the Auditor-General highlighted the need for health system planning that uses up-to-date data. The Auditor-General stated—

It is important that emergency departments and the Queensland Ambulance Service have accurate, readily available, time-based performance measures. This will help them identify performance issues so they can work with and across other clinical areas to address the causes of delays.

I would go further and suggest that it is important for all Queenslanders to have access to such data so they can make informed decisions about their health treatment options. New South Wales reports emergency department performance in real time. It means that in places like Sydney residents can make decisions about which hospital they will get treatment at in a timely fashion. The result is that pressure is shifted from hospitals where demand is greater to those that have additional capacity, all by providing residents with timely, transparent and accurate data.

In question time this morning we heard shouts from the Minister for Health that her state government was releasing hospital performance data, but let's have a look at a comparison between Queensland and the other states. In Queensland, the best data that I can access in relation to, say, the Mater public hospital is aggregated quarterly data, and the most recent data is more than 2½ months old. That data shows that half of category 2 patients were not seen within the clinically recommended time frame. These are not patients with minor illnesses and injuries; they are patients in very severe pain, patients suffering from acute stroke, sepsis or multiple major trauma. If we look at New South Wales right now, on their real-time hospital performance portal we can see that at the Royal North Shore Hospital 10 patients are waiting for treatment. That is the situation right now. We can see that there are 44 beds available in that emergency department. Even in the ALP utopia of Victoria, hospital performance data is released daily.

Queenslanders deserve better than being kept in the dark about the performance of their local hospitals. They deserve to know that when they call for an ambulance help will arrive. They deserve a health system that provides the emergency treatment that they need to survive. Queenslanders deserve to see real-time hospital performance data so that they can make informed decisions about their health options. I again call on the state government to end the culture of secrecy that has pervaded for so long. Hospital data is not being shared and it should be, and I call on the state government to get serious about transparency and implement real-time hospital performance data for the benefit of all Queenslanders.