




Speech By
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MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Health System

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.00 pm): Madam Deputy Speaker, in just two months Queensland Health has lurched from crisis to crisis. The minister is losing control of the system and the government is losing control of people's welfare. We owe it to Queenslanders to get health care right. More often than not people interact with our health system on their worst day: a shock diagnosis, an emergency event, a loved one in need at their most desperate hour. Right now our public health system is under siege, and I am going to highlight the changing positions that we have seen from the minister who is under attack in this place.

It seems that the minister constantly changes her position based on the attack point or the talking point of the day. There was no problem on 5 March and the minister said, 'Queensland public hospitals have performed exceptionally well.' On 25 March, after sustained pressure in this place from the LNP, an emergency meeting was held. After unprecedented demand there were crisis talks but no change. On 27 April we heard the most astonishing admission from a minister so early in her term that Queensland Health needed a cultural overhaul. In less than two months we have transitioned from 'absolutely nothing to see here' to a full-blown crisis.

What does the crisis look like? Every time we come into this House we tell the story of what the crisis looks like. Madam Deputy Speaker, let me tell you what that story looks like today in terms of numbers. Overnight this is what the picture showed us: 15 ambulances ramped at Logan Hospital; another 15 patients kept waiting at the RBWH; 13 crews ramped at the Prince Charles Hospital in Chermside; and code yellows at the Gold Coast and Ipswich hospitals. We have heard lots of different things about code yellows.

Ms Bates: Nothing to worry about.

Mr CRISAFULLI: There was nothing to worry about at one stage, then it was an unmitigated disaster, then they were 6.3s, then they were back to code yellows and every single South-East Queensland hospital was escalated to level 3, extreme delays overnight. Today as we sat in this House whistleblowers called the LNP to advise that elective surgery was cancelled at the PA Hospital and at 8 am today there were 34 patients in the RBWH waiting for a bed. There was an announcement of \$100 million to fix the problem but no mention of support, no mention of training, no mention of culture, no mention of what the minister intends to do to fix a broken system—just a cry to Canberra to do something and a patchwork from the minister to say that this money will fix the crisis we have seen lurching forward as the government loses control.

What does it look like through the eyes of honest Queenslanders? I have given you the number so now I may as well tell you, Madam Deputy Speaker, what it means to everyday Queenslanders who have reached out to the opposition. As one of her defences the minister stands up and asks why we are attacking hardworking staff, but we are in their corner. We are trying to give them a voice, to effect

some change, for somebody to take responsibility so we do not see this moveable feast of it always being someone else's fault—other than the people who are paid to administer it, and that is the government. Rod from the Gold Coast said—

My 89 year old father-in-law was admitted to the Toowoomba Hospital on Thursday 29 April, with a compound, open wound which resulted in a badly dislocated thumb after a fall at home.

He was brought by ambulance to emergency.

He was told to wait for available operating time and made nil-by-mouth. After many phone calls and much disappointment, he was constantly pushed back on that waiting line, longer than 48 hours.

No patient, let alone a frail 89 year-old, should be treated with such disregard for his condition. At his age and his condition, it will take weeks to recover, being nil-by-mouth for days. The nursing staff were great, but the system was totally broken.

These are the words of Queenslanders. They are not my words. During question time today the member for Oodgeroo raised the case of Catherine from Redlands, who said—

Last September my dad was diagnosed with Acute Myeloid Leukaemia and was advised that the disease was terminal. Dad was given a life span of three-six months.

The paramedic tried to tell the nursing staff that all dad needed was to have his canula placed in again—the paramedic could not do it because it was 'hospital equipment'

I said to the nurse 'you do realise that dad is terminal' and her reply was you can try again in the morning there may not be as many people here'.

This is when I feel that my dad gave up the will to live. Dad passed away on the Saturday of that week.

An officer in charge of the metro ambulance station contacted us this week. The officer said—

It is internally reported that on a daily bases there is no resources to respond to emergency cases and consequently they sit in pending queues until an ambulance becomes available. In Queensland there have been more deaths in the last six months from ambulance delays than people who have died from COVID throughout the pandemic. This is a fact. Why does the right person have to die for the system to change?

I say to the officer, 'They do not.' We are going to force change. We are going to continue to hold this government to account until they realise that these are the stories of real Queenslanders. They are not condemning paramedics. They are not condemning doctors or nurses. They are not reaching out to us and telling us about frontline staff who do not care about them. Quite the opposite. They are seeing their frustration and they are feeling their frustration. They are living through it. A minister who is absolutely clueless, a minister who is unable to administer the medicine that a sick system needs leaves Queenslanders with the honest belief that the government is losing control of the system.

I say to the minister, I say to the Premier and I say to the cabinet: 'Stop blaming Canberra. Stop blaming COVID. Stop blaming culture. This is on you.' It is time the government fixed this broken system. They are losing control of health in this state, and we are seeing it through the eyes of real Queenslanders. We are seeing it in the numbers. While we were getting ready to come into this place there were 34 patients at the RBWH waiting for a bed.

Imagine the family of those who are lined up for elective surgery today at the PA. Just imagine what goes through their mind. They have made the sacrifice. Absolutely they will accept it if it is because of a pandemic. If a hospital is closed because there is an outbreak of COVID of course they will accept it. But they are not going to accept it because the government cannot administer a basic service in this state, nor should they. Nor should the ambulance officer who gets in his or her vehicle tonight to provide a service for Queenslanders, only to sit in frustration at the end of a ramp knowing that they cannot provide the service to that Queenslanders who has called on them in their hour of need and they cannot provide the service to the other Queenslanders who is waiting on the other end of the phone repeatedly calling back. Then there is the operator on the end of the phone who has to deal with the grief of the person who just wants their loved one to be looked at.

We have people dying in the arms of their loved ones because the system is broken. That is not a slight on paramedics, Minister; it is a slight on a broken system and the government is losing control of it. I say, as I have said every Tuesday, I give notice to the government: tomorrow we will be asking more questions on this. Please do not be surprised because we are determined to give a voice to voiceless Queenslanders whether they are at the front line or on the receiving end of a government that is losing control of health in this state.