




Speech By
Ros Bates

MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA

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MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Health System, Performance

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (2.15 pm): I rise today to speak about the state of Queensland's public health system. For more than 12 months the reporting of key metrics associated with the performance of our state's hospital system has not been available to the public. For 12 months we have simply not known the health of our health system. It was widely reported that in the middle of last year, as the COVID-19 pandemic entered full swing, our hospitals were not seeing as many patients coming through their doors. People stayed home and heeded the warnings that were given, but as 2020 moved on stories began filtering through of increasing pressure on our doctors, nurses and paramedics on the front line. This all came to a head last week, when we heard media reports of patients being treated in the bathroom and people lying on ambulance stretchers for more than seven hours when they had not even been seen by a doctor or a nurse. That is just not good enough.

These stories painted a sobering picture of how our public hospital system is being run under this government. Last Friday afternoon we learned that the state of our public health system is more parlous than first thought. The performance data which has been hidden for 12 months was conveniently released at 2 pm on Friday. The numbers released by the government do not lie. Here is the headline figure: 34 per cent of patients in our public hospital system waited on an ambulance stretcher for more than 30 minutes after arriving at hospital. I repeat for the benefit of the House: during the 2020 December quarter more than one in three people waited on an ambulance stretcher for 30 minutes or longer, and these people had not been seen by a doctor or a nurse in that time.

Members of this House will know that I have been keeping a keen eye on these statistics for a long time now, but I have not seen ambulance ramping numbers this bad for years. It is deeply worrisome. With the member for Redcliffe at the helm of Queensland Health, ambulance ramping at our public hospitals is back. Speaking of Redcliffe, some of the most troubling ramping figures across the state are reserved for the hospital in the member's own electorate. Nearly one in every two patients arriving at the Redcliffe Hospital by ambulance wait more than 30 minutes on a stretcher before being seen. That is an eight per cent increase from December last year.

In fact, the numbers across the whole of the Metro North HHS are concerning. At the Prince Charles Hospital and the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, 41 per cent of patients are ramped—an increase of 18 per cent and 17 per cent respectively from December last year. At Caboolture it is 34 per cent. If the largest and best resourced HHS in the state cannot cope, how can others expect to? It does not matter where we look across Queensland, the numbers do not get much better. At Logan, Rockhampton, Ipswich and on the Sunshine and Gold coasts nearly one in two people is waiting on an ambulance stretcher for more than 30 minutes. It is little wonder that the emergency department performance numbers across the state are stubbornly high.

Nearly one in four people who presented at a public hospital emergency department in the 2020 December quarter did not get seen within the clinically recommended time frames. The worst numbers for emergency department performance were again at the Logan and Ipswich hospitals where 40 per

cent of patients were not seen on time. Two years ago in March 2019 South-East Queensland's public hospital system was brought to its knees, with code yellow orders placed on several facilities. I fear we could again see these code yellow situations if the government does not clean up its act and sort out these problems quickly.

To conclude, we know why these figures were kept hidden for so long. It is because Queensland's public hospital system is sick. If the system is sick, we deserve to know and, more importantly, Queenslanders deserve to know. For the doctors, nurses and paramedics who day in and day out strive to keep us healthy and well, this is not good enough. The mismanagement by Labor in running our public health system is not good enough and I am now beginning to wonder why the member for Redcliffe is not good enough to run Queensland Health. These problems need fixing, and they need fixing quickly. For Labor to stand idly by is not good enough.

(Time expired)