




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA

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MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Hospitals, Access

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (2.47 pm): We are back to the bad old days of Queensland Health. It is a sad reality for the hundreds and thousands of Queenslanders needing care from our public hospital system each day, and let me be clear: the situation is no reflection on our doctors, nurses and other hardworking frontline health staff. These people are doing their level best to care for and treat our sick and injured Queenslanders, and what an amazing job they do. This is about mismanagement of the system, about high-level accountability and about the minister standing up and doing her job, because we owe it to Queenslanders to get health care right.

On the news again last night we saw harrowing pictures of ambulance on ambulance lined up waiting to off-load their patients into emergency departments. Fifteen ambulances were ramped at Logan Hospital, another 15 were lined up at RBWH and yet another 13 crews were parked waiting their turn at the Prince Charles Hospital. Some of those patients were waiting more than five hours.

Put yourself in the back of that ambulance. Put yourself in the shoes of that person who has called triple 0. Maybe they have had a fall. Maybe they are experiencing chest pain. Maybe it is an asthma attack. They are not calling an ambulance just because; they are calling an ambulance because there is an emergency. Alternatively, put yourself in the shoes of the paramedic, forced to sit idle on the ramp checking your patient but unable to answer the calls going out over the radio and unable to support your colleagues as they battle to meet community demand but, because of a mismanaged and hamstrung system, they cannot get to the emergency. This is a system under siege. The figures back up the story. In February this year 40 per cent of ambulances statewide were ramped. At our busiest and best funded hospitals—the Royal Brisbane and Women’s Hospital, Logan and Redlands—it was more than 50 per cent.

Those opposite are very quick to denigrate the reputation of the LNP when we were in government, but let the record show that, after three years of our administration, by 2015 ambulance ramping was down to 15 per cent. That is right: in six years those opposite have increased ramping by 25 per cent. Sadly for Queenslanders, once they are inside the hospitals things do not get much better. Queensland’s emergency department performance is a national disgrace. In the December quarter 2020, 23 per cent of patients who attended a Queensland Health emergency department did not get seen in the clinically recommended time frame. Then there is the waiting list debacle. In January 2015, 30,000 Queenslanders waited for elective surgery. By December 2020 that had ballooned to 55,000 Queenslanders—nearly 25,000 more.

A doctor within Queensland Health told me this morning—

It is a state of learned hopelessness. The ED doctors have given up. There are never any beds. The ED is always full. The ambulances are always ramped. Doctors and nurses on the wards spend their whole day talking to bed managers and looking for ways to kick patients out rather than looking after them. Surgeons are paid big dollars to twiddle their thumbs. The theatres are there, the fancy equipment is there, the theatre nurses are there, the waiting lists are there, but there are no beds to put the patients in, and this is not unique to one hospital, it is across every major tertiary hospital in Queensland.

In my own electorate we hear from people fed up with waiting. Take Patricia's case. Last year she was told she was a category 1 and would have surgery within 90 days. Six months later she lives in agony waiting for bilateral hip replacements so that she can walk again. Bumped up and down a waiting list, from one hospital to another, into the private system, back to the state, crying, pleading for help. These are people, not just numbers. This is your grandmother, your brother, your daughter, your grandson.

We know people are treated in bathrooms underneath a shower and we know life-saving pelvic exenteration surgery has been cancelled at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital with people from Queensland forced to travel to Sydney and Melbourne. We know that there are sterile storage rooms in our hospitals which are not actually sterile. We also know that there is a problem with the Kimguard wrap which will impact elective surgery and the minister has not even begun to address that. We must get health care right. Queenslanders deserve it.