




Speech By
Ros Bates

MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA

Record of Proceedings, 14 September 2021

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Health System; Caboolture Hospital

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (2.25 pm): Queenslanders deserve a world-class public health system. After all, we need a public health system that can be depended on and that every honest Queenslander can attend knowing they will receive the very best, because that is what Queenslanders deserve. Sadly, Queensland Health is beginning to crumble. We know that under the member for Redcliffe Labor is losing control of Queensland Health. To see this we need look no further than the Auditor-General's report tabled this morning. It offers a scathing review of how our public emergency departments are functioning. This is a tale of woe, and it is a seven-year tale. Let me repeat that: seven years. This is not new. Queensland Health is in crisis, and it has been like this for years now. No, it is not COVID-19 that is to blame.

Those opposite have been trying to hide behind COVID as the reason Queensland Health is a shambles. They have blamed COVID, they have blamed Queensland Health's culture, they have blamed the Commonwealth, they have even tried to blame sick and injured patients for the reason our public health system is a mess, but it is none of those things. This is an ingrained, deep-seated problem, a learned hopelessness, a system on its knees under a government which it inherited and which is only interested in itself. If those opposite are still trying to find someone else to blame, they need look no further than the mirror. Is it a coincidence that our EDs have been overrun? Is it coincidence that our ambulances have been ramped at a rapidly increasing rate? No, it is not a coincidence; it is because the Labor Party is running Queensland Health into the ground. What a shameful record! It is a record that, I believe in time, critics will judge the government very harshly on—so too the people of Queensland.

What does this report say? It says that, as a percentage of the entire Queensland patient population, our emergency departments have had a sustained decline in performance. The report also says that from July 2020 to February 2021 only one of the top 26 reporting hospitals met the targets for both ramping and time spent in emergency departments. That was the Mount Isa Hospital. The report also notes that overall patient off-stretcher performance—otherwise known as ambulance ramping—for the top 26 reporting hospitals has steadily decreased, from 85.9 per cent in 2014-15 to 68.5 per cent for the period July 2020 to February 2021. This proves this is not a new problem.

The report also noted that the wait time between ambulance arrival and triage is no longer monitored, but it used to be. After the 2012 MEDAI report, Queensland Health protocol included a five-minute target for time to triage. Queensland Health removed this target in December 2019. Why? What are they trying to hide from Queenslanders? Those opposite have a track record when it comes to this, and this looks like another example of a Labor government overseeing a health system which they are very quickly losing control of.

On a separate but related matter, I want to talk about the Caboolture Hospital. On Thursday last week, the function room at the Caboolture Showgrounds was full of people who came forward to tell their stories. We know that over the past few weeks allegations have been made about inappropriate

conduct and malpractice at the facility. This is no slight on the vast majority of doctors and nurses at that hospital who day in and day out provide excellent care, but there are bad apples working at that hospital. We deserve to know. The people of Caboolture deserve to know.

The stories of those who attended were harrowing and shocking. In that room were brave, honest Queenslanders who believed that our public health system had let them down. They had tremendous courage to share what were deeply personal stories, and we gave them the undertaking that we would fight for them. We will stand up for Olivia Keating, who had her bowel stitched to her abdominal wall following the birth of her child. We will stand up for the Tremble family, who want you to know what happened to their son, Robert. We will stand up for Jody Heywood, who suffered for months after a routine procedure to remove his appendix went wrong.

We raised allegations during parliament's last sitting. First, it was 'nothing to see here', next there was a hotline and then next a review. We want to know more. Who is completing this review? When will it report back? Will families or potential victims be consulted or interviewed? This is not over. We will continue to stand up for the people of Caboolture and we will not let this go away.