




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA

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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Queensland Ambulance Service, Road Incident; Caboolture Hospital

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (2.16 pm): I rise to address this House about those opposite losing control of Queensland Health. First I join with my parliamentary colleagues on passing on our sincere condolences to the 65-year-old nurse and her 87-year-old patient, both killed yesterday in an accident in Central Queensland. Both were on their way to Rockhampton Hospital as part of a routine patient transfer when they were killed. A paramedic was also injured and we send our best wishes for their speedy recovery. It is a tragic reminder of the daily dangers facing our frontline staff as they complete their duties. We thank them for their outstanding work.

If it were not for the outstanding work of our frontline staff and brave whistleblowing patients we would not know about the true state of Queensland Health, in particular in Caboolture. Let me repeat that we on this side of the chamber have nothing but praise and admiration for frontline health workers throughout this great state. Throughout the duration of this pandemic they continue to deliver services to Queenslanders, but they are stymied every day by this government.

For the benefit of the House here is a reminder of how the events at Caboolture Hospital transpired. First the minister accused the opposition of not telling the truth when we raised the concerns of patients who came out of that hospital sicker than they went in. Those opposite said the opposition were exaggerating the claims of a woman who had gone in for what should have been one of the happiest days of her life—to deliver a baby—but came out with massive complications, with organs outside her abdomen, due to what could only be seen as medical incompetence. I pay homage to Olivia Keating here today. Then there was Janelle who went in for simple day surgery but ended up with serious complications after her bladder was nicked and her bowel was perforated. These patients stood with great courage to tell their disturbing stories and the media agreed that their anguish should be shared.

After days of pressure this minister conceded there should be a review. When the terms of reference were finally revealed it showed that the review would have excluded most of the brave patients with their complaints about the quality of care they had received. The people of Queensland are not fools. They saw the review for what it was: a sham. The opposition raised concerns at the outset. I wrote to the health minister about these concerns, but I have not heard back. The terms of reference do not indicate that patients will be appropriately interviewed or consulted. The terms of reference only had the review running for four weeks. It has now been extended to six. Finally, the terms of reference indicated no real level of independence. It was the type of review one has when one does not really want to know the answer.

Our offices continue to be deluged with people wanting to raise concerns and issues about their treatment at Caboolture Hospital. People are too scared to go through the official channels. They are concerned that the department is investigating itself and that their complaints will not be taken seriously. The complaints process is so difficult to navigate that people cannot even find where to go, so here is

the phone number if patients want to raise issues (07)36479559. Concerningly, we have heard that the hotline might not be functioning like it should. People are waiting for a return call that never comes. I will repeat the hotline number (07)36479559. It is little wonder people feel hesitant to call the hotline.

I welcome the government's backdown. I welcome that they have extended the inquiry by two weeks in recognition of the level of concern and number of complaints already received. However, more needs to be done. We urge this government to ensure that this is a proper and thorough investigation. The people of Queensland deserve a proper investigation of the issues that have led to so many complaints about this hospital, which serves a growing region in our state. The people of Queensland deserve a chance to put their stories forward. They deserve to have those cases investigated and for recommendations to be developed so that patients can again have confidence in our health system. They deserve to know that when they enter a Queensland Health facility they will be treated properly and with respect. They deserve to know that when they leave that hospital they are not sicker than when they were admitted.

We want the people of Queensland to know that we will keep fighting for them. We will keep fighting to make sure that their stories are heard. We will keep fighting to make sure that this government is held accountable and that Queenslanders get the health system they deserve, no matter where they live in this great state.