




Speech By
Ros Bates

MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA

Record of Proceedings, 1 December 2021

MOTION

Bundaberg, Health Services

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (5.33 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the motion moved by the member for Burnett in relation to the unfolding situation at Bundaberg Hospital. It is a concerning situation. At the very outset, I pay homage to our frontline healthcare heroes working tirelessly in Bundaberg. I say to the doctors, nurses and allied health professionals: I know how hard you are working. I know that you are making the best of what you have. I know that you want to deliver the very best care to every single patient who walks through those doors. I know that you are doing all of those things, because as a nurse I have done it all, too. The work that you do is incredible. I am proud of every last person in that facility who puts it all on the line day in and day out, striving to give their patients the best care possible.

These heroes on the front line are being hamstrung. They are being hamstrung by a mismanaged system, and that mismanagement starts at the very top. It starts with the minister who sits in the chair on the opposite side of this chamber who is answerable to the Premier of this state, who sits beside her. If there is one thing for certain, we know that the government will shift into its default position when things go awry. That default position is to blame someone, something, anything—they will blame anyone but themselves. If it is bad news, they never take responsibility. They never will hold themselves to account.

In fact, ministerial responsibility and accountability are long gone under this government. Now in their third term, those opposite have lost touch with what is really happening inside Queensland Health and have lost touch with what is going on at Bundaberg Hospital. If they really had any sense of how bad the Queensland Health crisis is, they would be doing more to fix the problem. The third-term hubris, the arrogance, has set in, hasn't it? They cannot see how bad the problem really is, and the people of Queensland and the people of Bundaberg are paying for it.

The consequences for the people of Bundaberg are severe. The ED in Bundaberg is the third worst performing ED in the state when it comes to treating patients within the clinically recommended time frame. Nearly half of all patients who arrive at the Bundaberg ED will not be treated on time. Since June 2020, that figure has nearly doubled. Ambulance ramping in Bundaberg sits at 26 per cent. That means one in four people who arrive at the hospital by ambulance will not be moved off their ambulance stretcher to see a doctor or nurse in the clinically recommended time.

There are 814 people waiting for elective surgery right now in Bundaberg and a further 3,416 people sitting on the waiting list for the waiting list—and they have not even seen the specialist yet! The wait to see a gastroenterologist in Bundaberg is frightening. Some 80 per cent of patients in Bundaberg needing to see a gastroenterologist will not get their appointment inside the clinically recommended time frame. We know that cancers such as bowel cancer can be treated effectively if they are detected early, but if you are waiting longer than you should to even get the first appointment with the specialist the risk of the cancer spreading worsens each and every day.

The member for Burnett, of course, uncovered that there is no permanent radiographer in the breast cancer screening clinic in Bundaberg. It is taking more than eight weeks to get breast screening in one of Queensland's proudest regional communities. It beggars belief. This is why we need to get health care right in Queensland. We need to get it right because people's health and wellbeing are on the line.

At the moment it is all going wrong. Bundaberg residents know it; they live it each and every day. After being promised a level 5 hospital by the now member for Bundaberg at the 2020 election, the people of Bundaberg can and should feel rightly aggrieved, because they are not getting a level 5 hospital. We know that. The member for Bundaberg cannot even say the name of a level 5 hospital. What are they actually getting, member for Bundaberg? Does the member actually know? It is a level 5 'service', which is very different to what was promised at the election. Does the minister actually know? Does the Premier actually know? The three members I have just named do not know what is going on in Queensland Health. They are losing control of it—so much so that they are now losing control of the ability to deliver the most basic healthcare service such as breast-screening services. For shame! It is not good enough. Those opposite should be and will be held to account at the next election.

(Time expired)