



Speech By  
**Deb Frecklington**


**MEMBER FOR NANANGO**

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Record of Proceedings, 1 September 2022

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENT**

**Kingaroy Hospital**

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (2.18 pm): When I met with nurses from the Kingaroy Hospital in early August I promised them I would continue to fight on their behalf to highlight the ongoing problems they are facing in their roles each and every day. I appreciate the nurses' decision to speak out. It is significant, and I thank them for sharing their personal experiences of working in our local health system. Their only goal is to improve the level of care they are able to provide to their patients. Sadly, however, there are so many problems at the Kingaroy Hospital that they really and truly feel the safety of patients and staff is at risk.

I would like to list some of the issues that these nurses have told us about. There is no permanent security at the Kingaroy Hospital. The nurses have suffered physical, verbal and even sexual assault from patients. With no security, they tell me they feel extremely vulnerable and unsafe. There are ongoing concerns by the staff about the duress alarm system and its reliability. They do not know if the system works and this concern has been raised over and over since the new hospital was occupied. The nurses call code blacks but it has never been explained who will actually respond because there is no security. Does it fall to the wardsmen or does it fall to the local police? This is unclear and needs urgent attention. The Kingaroy Hospital needs that full-time security.

They tell me that there is chronic understaffing at the Kingaroy Hospital. A former nurse who spoke at the Kingaroy health crisis meeting conveyed her experience, saying she actually had to leave her nursing job at the hospital because continued staff shortages meant she simply could not provide the high level of care she aspired to and which her patients deserved. The inpatient ward is constantly under pressure to exceed their staffed bed capacity when patients need to be admitted from the ED. They simply do not have the staff-to-patient ratio they need. They say the lack of medical staff means some patients wait all day or even days to be seen by a doctor.

Hospital staff are burnt out, morale is low and many are on stress leave. The nurses tell me they simply cannot deal with the pressure much longer without an acknowledgement from the government that there are staff shortages at the Kingaroy Hospital. They need support. They are expected to complete all of their administrative tasks and undertake patient care. They say this is impossible, and I agree with them. There must be urgent action to fix this ongoing high number of short-staffed shifts.

While I am talking about the new hospital, I will talk about the fact that the short-stay unit at Kingaroy Hospital has never opened. There is flooding of the hospital when it rains and flooding from the bathrooms which have never drained properly. The entrance doors to the wards have to be manually opened, making it difficult for staff to manoeuvre beds and patients. There are broken doors and mental health rooms that do not lock. I ask the government to please listen to them. These nurses deserve answers.