




Speech By
Ros Bates

MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA

Record of Proceedings, 24 May 2022

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Queensland Health; Bundaberg Hospital

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (2.26 pm): At the outset of my contribution here today, I want to place on the record my sincere condolences to the family of five-year-old Hiyaan Kapil. There are no words for the grief and the heartache that this family must be feeling right now. On behalf of the opposition, I say to the family of Hiyaan that you are in our thoughts and in our prayers following your devastating loss. Hiyaan's family deserve an explanation and they deserve answers, and those must be provided by Queensland Health. I will also say that I am troubled by the Minister for Health's failure to acknowledge this tragedy today. The minister had every opportunity to acknowledge this tragedy in the House this morning but she chose not to.

I want to raise an important matter which has been raised with the opposition in relation to the Bundaberg Hospital. Members will know that the opposition recently held a health crisis town hall in Bundaberg where over 100 residents came out in force to bravely speak up about the worrying state of the public health system in Bundaberg. Some of the stories were truly harrowing, and I again want to thank all those who attended. However, the very concerning issue I would like to raise today is in relation to clinical malpractice at the Bundaberg Hospital. Specifically, it has been alleged that a number of clinical staff at the Bundaberg Hospital may have administered sedative medication to patients over an extended period of time. The allegations state that there may have been specific incidents which caused severe patient harm, all occurring on medical ward 3 of the hospital. I wrote to the minister on 11 May 2022 raising these concerns directly with her. I am yet to receive any reply. I table my letter.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 11 May 2022, from the member for Mudgeeraba, Ms Ros Bates MP, to the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services, Hon. Yvette D'Ath, regarding allegations of clinical malpractice at Bundaberg Base Hospital [698](#).

In that letter, I asked that the minister promptly address the following matters: one, to confirm that an internal investigation by the Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service was undertaken following inappropriate medication administered on medical ward 3 of the Bundaberg Hospital; two, to provide the number of staff who were dismissed, disciplined or referred to the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency following the investigation; three, to confirm how many patients were potentially affected by inappropriate medication administration; four, to confirm over what period of time the inappropriate medication administration occurred; and, five, to advise how many serious adverse patient outcomes were identified as part of the review, including any incidents or serious harm or death.

If substantiated, these allegations are deeply troubling. This is a hospital, a town and a community who have walked this sad and sorry path before. You would be hard pressed to find a Queenslanders who does not know about the tragedy that occurred in the Bundaberg Hospital during the first decade of this century. We thought that saga of clinical malpractice was consigned to history. Alas, it appears this issue has raised its ugly head again.

I have given the minister nearly two weeks to respond to my letter, but time is now up. The minister needs to come clean about what has happened. These allegations need to be addressed. I ask the question here now: how long has the minister known about this? In answer to a question this

morning, the minister said that she was aware of one case but did not answer the question if there were any other cases. Was it before the letter was sent two weeks ago or has the minister known for longer? If the minister has known for longer, why has the minister not told anyone?

In the interests of openness and transparency for the people of Bundaberg, the minister should address this issue in the House today. The minister's prepared statement this morning is not enough. The people of Bundaberg deserve better than this. What if the minister was not asked? Would anyone have ever known what happened on medical ward 3? Clearly it was the minister's plan to sweep this issue under the carpet rather than address the issue, and that is shameful.

I would like to acknowledge Beryl Crosby, who has offered her support to families who have been affected by the alleged malpractice. I would also like to place on the record an acknowledgement of the hard work of my colleague the member for Burnett, Stephen Bennett. His advocacy for a better health system in Bundaberg has been tireless.

That is in stark contrast to the member for Bundaberg, who promised a new level 5 hospital to the people of Bundaberg. You can find that Facebook post in the member for Bundaberg's deleted items. He deleted that promise. The gall! We will not forget that promise, member for Bundaberg, and trust me, the people of Bundaberg will not forget it either.