



Speech By  
**Ros Bates**

**MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA**

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Record of Proceedings, 25 May 2022

**MOTION**

**Central Queensland, Health Services**

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (5.00 pm): I move—

That this House notes the widespread community health concerns across Central Queensland, and calls on the health minister, member for Gladstone, member for Rockhampton and member for Keppel to:

1. acknowledge their failure in implementing the Destination 2030 plan developed by the Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service to date.
2. commit to implementing all services and associated infrastructure identified in the report.
3. install a CT scanner at the Biloela Hospital to ensure that the people of Biloela and surrounding areas have access to this basic service.
4. acknowledge the decline in essential health services, like maternity and intensive care beds, across the region.

I have put this motion before the House because we cannot get a straight answer from those opposite. The Queensland Health crisis is not just affecting Queenslanders in the south-east; this crisis reaches all corners of our great state. Many of the problems are the same, repeated in hospital after hospital up and down Queensland. We know how bad ramping is; in Queensland it is the worst in the nation. We know how bad our elective surgery waiting list is; it has nearly doubled since those opposite came to government. We know how hard it is to see a specialist, because in Queensland there are nearly a quarter of a million people waiting to see one in our public hospitals—a quarter of a million people. It makes your eyes water.

No matter how you slice it, those opposite are losing control of Queensland Health, and that is blatantly obvious in Central Queensland. We know who is accountable for this mess. It is the health minister, but the minister fails to accept responsibility. Let me tell the House who is complicit in the Queensland health crisis. It is the member for Gladstone, it is the member for Rockhampton and it is the member for Keppel. Those members are as idle as one of the dozens of ambulances stuck on Central Queensland hospital ramps when it comes to advocating to fix this crisis.

Last year across Central Queensland, paramedics spent nearly 6,000 hours waiting with patients on hospital ramps, in corridors and in hallways. For the benefit of the House, let us listen to some more of the numbers behind the crisis: there are more than 2,000 people waiting for elective surgery across Central Queensland; one in 10 of them are not being seen in the clinically recommended time; and nearly one in four people arriving at emergency departments across Central Queensland are not seen on time either. They are frightening numbers. Make no mistake: this is not the fault of the amazing doctors, nurses, paramedics and other health professionals across Central Queensland. They are trying their hearts out.

I was up at Gladstone Hospital a few weeks ago with the Leader of the Opposition. We know firsthand the incredible work those clinicians do, and so do the people of Central Queensland. But this state government will not empower those doctors, nurses and paramedics. In fact, those opposite have

taken it away. Those opposite are not enabling the basic healthcare services that the people of Central Queensland deserve; nor are they resourcing the services that clinicians of Central Queensland want to deliver.

Take the Biloela Hospital, for example. It does not have a CT scanner. That is something that so many of us take for granted, but it is not available to the people of Biloela and surrounds. Minister, I ask: what will it take to get one of these machines and the appropriate staff into the Biloela Hospital. This is just one example of the basic services that the people of Central Queensland are going without. Some are forced to wait days with injuries—

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Order! Pause the clock. Member for Nanango, member for Logan and member for Nicklin, you will stop your quarrelling across the chamber.

**Ms BATES:** Some are forced to wait days with injuries and forced to drive hours just to have their scan. We also know that historically those opposite have stripped maternity services out of many rural and regional communities over many years. It happened in Central Queensland. The Central Queensland HHS has a plan to tackle some of these issues. It is called Destination 2030. When we spoke with clinicians in Gladstone and Calliope recently, they despaired. They despaired that the document is sitting in the minister's bottom draw gathering dust. Those on the coalface in the Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service are waiting for action. They are waiting for the equipment they know could save lives and that could make treatment efficient and effective. They are waiting for the front-line colleagues who could help to treat sick Queenslanders in acceptable time frames and acceptable facilities. With those opposite, I fear their wait may not have an end in sight.

I say this to the members for Gladstone, Rockhampton and Keppel: stand up, lift your game and listen. Listen to the desperate pleas of people in your communities. Listen to the voices behind the health crisis in Central Queensland. They are not numbers on a spreadsheet. They are not statistics on a website. They are Queenslanders.

Our team have been there. We have listened. We are not trying to fudge the figures or hide the problem. We know the Queensland health crisis is real. The reason we know it is because the people of Central Queensland have told us—the clinicians, the patients. We have heard them and we are fighting tooth and nail for a health system which will be there for them in their hour of need.