




Speech By
Ros Bates

MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA

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ADJOURNMENT

Office of the Health Ombudsman; Braun, Dr W

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (12.42 pm): During debate in this chamber last week I spoke about the failures of the Office of the Health Ombudsman in the case of Dr William Braun. For those not familiar with the case, it was a shocking breakdown of a key pillar of Queensland's patient safety system—a system which should be there to protect Queensland patients when they have been wronged or left with complications from clinicians who do the wrong thing. Let me be clear: it is a tiny minority of our clinicians who fit into this category, but in the case of Dr Braun it is true—he is one of them. In this case the system which should have protected the patients he wronged did not work.

The Health Ombudsman had its case kicked out of both the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeal because the Health Ombudsman failed to meet its own deadline in investigating the case. It failed to meet its own deadline and the case was thrown out—twice. It is unbelievable. My heart goes out to all of those patients of Dr William Braun who have suffered under his care. There are dozens of them. Over the years I have spoken to many of them, each of their stories devastating. I asked the Office of the Health Ombudsman about this in estimates when it appeared before the parliamentary committee earlier this year. I asked how this could ever happen. The answer I got? Human error. Let me tell members: when some of the patients who suffered complications under Dr Braun's care found out about that, they were distraught—absolutely and entirely distraught. Some feel broken. Some feel like the only avenue left for Dr Braun to be punished for his wrongs was closed.

I cannot begin to understand the pain and frustration of those patients nor the other clinicians who made complaints. However, I want them to know that I, too, think that the failure is completely unacceptable. In the case of Dr William Braun, the ombudsman's case being kicked out of court is unprecedented. So what happens now? Is it a case of Dr Braun being allowed to practise again? If that were the case, I feel it would be a disaster waiting to happen. I think the patients deserve to know what is going on, I think the Queensland public deserves to know what is going on and will Dr Braun ever face a court for what he did? Is the minister seeking any advice on how any prosecution could be made and has the case been referred to any other organisation to see if justice could be served? What we also do not know is this: is Dr William Braun working for Queensland Health? I have asked the minister. She has not told us. Is Dr William Braun working for Queensland Health, because Queenslanders deserve to know if Dr Braun is practising in this state?