




Speech By
Ros Bates

MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA

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PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENT

Queensland Health

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (2.12 pm): I will be blunt. It has been a horror year in the health portfolio. I take no pleasure in saying that—absolutely none. It has been a horror year and we need to be honest about it.

Our frontline health staff are exhausted and broken and many are considering walking away from their professions. That is a fact. They feel desperately hopeless and desperately sorry for the patients they treat, whether it is a Queenslander who has phoned triple 0 for an ambulance and has been waiting nine hours for it to arrive, whether it is a Queenslander who has waited eight hours on the hospital ramp, whether it is a Queenslander still in the ED waiting room after 12 hours, whether it is a Queenslander waiting years for elective surgery or whether it is a Queenslander waiting years just to get an appointment with a specialist. Our frontline staff have to respond to and comfort Queensland patients in these horrible circumstances each and every day. Queenslanders are suffering as a result and it is our frontline staff who are being left to pick up the pieces.

Time after time this year and last we have seen the Minister for Health's incompetence on full display. The minister has proven herself to be incapable of managing the health portfolio. Let's run through the failures just this year. Ambulance ramping hit record highs of 46 per cent this year and it is still at 44 per cent—impossibly high. The elective surgery waiting list has nearly doubled since Labor came into office. There are close to 60,000 people waiting for elective surgery. The minister seems incapable of addressing this problem. More than 270,000 patients are waiting for an appointment with a specialist. We learned that nearly 20 people died while they waited for an ambulance. One of those patients waited nine hours and one patient died while waiting in their driveway.

We have seen the atrocity that occurred at the Mackay Base Hospital, the greatest failure in patient safety in Queensland since the Jayant Patel saga. Those women were so horribly wronged, all while the minister was at the helm of the health department. It was all happening under her nose without her having the slightest idea despite it being raised with her for well over a year.

Then we had the absolute disaster that has occurred in the DNA lab. We do not know the full extent of the problems yet. However, it could turn out to be the greatest case of government maladministration in living memory, a miscarriage of justice with murderers and rapists walking free. This is what the police minister thought of it: pure politics. I say this to the minister: if having murderers and rapists walking free through our streets is the minister's version of 'pure politics', it is abundantly clear she is entirely unfit to hold the office she does.

The minister is in way over her head. Frontline staff know it. Respected stakeholder groups know it. We hear that even her colleagues know it. The Queensland public know it; they want her gone and in the Minister for Health's case, we have now arrived at that point. Time is up.