



Speech By
Hon. Yvette D'Ath

MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

Record of Proceedings, 12 October 2022

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Mackay Base Hospital, Obstetrics and Gynaecology Review Report

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (10.09 am): On 30 September the Mackay Hospital and Health Service released the findings of the investigation into its obstetrics and gynaecology service and the HHS's response to the recommendations. The report is damning in its identification of failings at multiple levels within Mackay HHS and, more particularly, the Mackay Base Hospital. The investigation team found multiple examples of substandard clinical care, poor clinical incident monitoring, poor management of safety and quality, complications and clinical deterioration and poor human resource management.

Too many women have been impacted by the failures of the Mackay Base Hospital obstetrics and gynaecology unit. Once again, I offer my unreserved apology to the women who have received inadequate clinical care because of the failures of this unit. Their courage in speaking out will not be in vain. Next Tuesday I will visit Mackay to attend a women's forum hosted by Dr Helen Brown, Acting Deputy Director-General of Clinical Excellence Queensland. The forum will provide impacted women with another opportunity to share their stories and to be updated on the pathways to compensation or further clinical advice which remain open to them.

Since receiving the investigation findings of multiple failures at the Mackay Base Hospital obstetrics and gynaecology unit, the government has acted swiftly to make improvements, including issuing a show cause notice to the Mackay HHS Board members as to why they should not be dismissed; appointing Dr Robert Herkes as a special advisor to the Mackay HHS Board to provide independent expert oversight of the response to issues raised in the investigation; and initiating a statewide health safety and quality improvement program, to be led by Dr Brown. In addition to this, Mackay HHS has created new senior leadership roles and strengthened clinical supervision, education and training.

I want to assure the Mackay community that the four clinicians involved in the clinical outcomes outlined in this report have been referred to the Office of the Health Ombudsman. A fifth individual referred to in the report has resigned from the HHS. I am advised none of these individuals is now involved in delivering clinical care at Mackay Base Hospital, nor a urologist who was suspended by the HHS last month. The opposition has made a series of claims about what it says it knew about the activities of the urologist dating back to last year. It is clear in the official *Hansard* record that I responded with the information that was available to me at the time these claims were made. It is equally clear under section 44 of the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011 that as minister I cannot give a direction about the employment of a particular person.

It is crucial as we move forward that the public is kept informed of the implementation of the recommendations, and the HHS has given that guarantee to the Mackay community. The implementation of the 122 recommendations detailed in the investigation report is ongoing, with 47 of

these already implemented. Many of the women impacted are on a pathway to clinical care and/or compensation under the process we established. Queensland Health continues to engage with the women who have been informed they do not meet the compensation threshold on other options that may be available to them. There is also a full spectrum of legal remedies potentially available to affected parties independent of the compensation pathway created pursuant to this investigation.

Our entire health system must learn from the failings at Mackay Base Hospital. While nothing can undo the distress and trauma these women have experienced, we can listen to them and learn from their experiences. I want to assure all the women who have been impacted, and the wider Mackay community, that we will do whatever it takes to create a more responsive local health service.