




Speech By
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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Health System

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (2.46 pm): I start my contribution today with these words: 'just going from one crisis to another'. They are quite profound words, aren't they? A crisis—and not just one but many. It is no small thing—one crisis to another, and another, and another, and another. It is chaos. That is Queensland Health under the Palaszczuk government. They just keep coming, and that is because Queensland Health is in crisis. Do not take my word for it, because the words that I started with—just one crisis to another—are not my words; they are the words of the health minister's chief of staff. I am not sure that truer words have ever been spoken.

The chorus acknowledging the crisis is now so loud that it cannot be ignored. Patients, doctors, nurses, paramedics, allied health staff—they call it a crisis. The minister's own chief of staff calls it a crisis. It is a crisis, yet the minister will not acknowledge it. How on earth can this minister fix the problems besieging our health system if she cannot even acknowledge how dire the situation is? That is a very legitimate question that the minister has not been able to come to grips with. One cannot fix a problem if one is not willing to acknowledge that it is even there, yet that very situation is playing out before our eyes. There are clearly people around the minister who believe it to be true.

It is a situation where the government is lurching from one crisis to another and it has descended into chaos. It seems like the minister is the last person in Queensland who will acknowledge it. That crisis extends to the maternity services on bypass across the state—in Gladstone, Biloela, Cooktown and Chinchilla; it extends to our emergency departments, where thousands and thousands of patients are spending more than 24 hours; and, of course, it extends to the hospital ramps, where ambulance after ambulance sits ramped for hours and hours.

Those paramedics cannot get back out on the road and the patients they are with sit stuck on the stretcher waiting for a bed that could be hours or, in some cases, days away. We have the worst ambulance ramping in the nation here in Queensland, and that is a fact. It is an unwanted title but sadly the Palaszczuk government owns it, and today the extent of the ramping crisis has been totally laid bare. Last year our paramedics sat on ambulance ramps for 147,000 hours. That means that they sat with their patients idling on the ramp for 400 hours every single day in 2022. That has broken the record for the number of hours our ambulances have been stuck on ramps. It is the equivalent of having 40 ambulances off the road every single day. Nearly 49,000 hours were lost across South Brisbane and close to 30,000 hours across North Brisbane. Across the Wide Bay lost hours have increased by 104 per cent since last year. It beggars belief. How did it come to this and how deep does this crisis run?

I want to share with the House the impacts of this, because there are real implications for Queenslanders because the government has lost control of healthcare services in Queensland. Last week on 12 April five-year-old Thomas severely broke his arm at his local park. His mother, Jessica, forwarded us the images of the break, and it is truly horrific how broken poor little Thomas's arm really

was. An off-duty QAS dispatch officer was luckily nearby and assisted with the triple-O call and in trying to keep Thomas calm and from inflicting any further damage to his badly broken limb. While on the phone they were told that no ambulance was available and that the wait was likely to be more than an hour. Together, Thomas, his mum, Jessica, and the off-duty dispatcher travelled to QEII's emergency department. After receiving pain medication intravenously and under heavy sedation, doctors worked to try and reset his arm unsuccessfully. Emergency surgery was required and the family was able to organise for Thomas to quickly go into the private system. Here is the kicker: after calling for an ambulance to transfer Thomas, the doctor had to come back in to tell Jessica that again no ambulance was available. With a cannula still stuck in his arm and under twilight sedation, Jessica had to get Thomas into a car to take him to a private facility.

(Time expired)