




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA

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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (2.15 pm): I would like to start today by reflecting on some numbers. Three terms and eight years of the Palaszczuk government and this is what Queensland gets. Fifteen per cent of ambulances were ramped when the government took office and 42 per cent of ambulances are ramped in Queensland today. There are 284,000 Queenslanders waiting to see a specialist and 59,300 Queenslanders are waiting for elective surgery. Four maternity wards are currently on bypass. Sixty thousand people live in the catchment of one of those bypass wards—Gladstone. In fact, 38 maternity units have been closed by successive Labor governments, and four health ministers will have overseen this most recent mess. Finally, there is one government which has presided over these debacles: the Palaszczuk Labor government, a government now so mired in chaos, so deep in crisis, that it has completely lost touch with the lives of Queenslanders across the length and breadth of the state.

When a government lurches from one crisis to another and when a government descends into chaos Queenslanders lose out, and the Queensland Health system is a case in point. Those opposite are only worried about themselves and their own electoral survival. They are so wrapped up in their own chaos and crisis that they cannot effectively manage our health system. That has been proven now beyond all doubt. It does not matter who sits in the health minister's position. Whether it is the member for Woodridge, the member for Murrumba, the member for Redcliffe or now the member for Waterford, it simply does not matter. Queenslanders are destined to see the same results because nothing has really changed. New faces—none. New ideas—zero. The Premier shuffled out incapable and shuffled in hopeless.

I want to remind the House about the member for Waterford's chequered ministerial history. The member was, without question, the worst child safety minister this state has ever seen. The most vulnerable in our society—children who have been let down by their own families—were failed by the member for Waterford. So damaging was her tenure she will forever be remembered and associated with the tragic deaths of Mason Jett Lee and Tiahleigh Palmer. This is the same member who went to Splendour in the Grass as the details of the Mason Jett Lee case were unfolding. This is the same member who admitted to washing the child safety data before releasing it to the public. We can only imagine what will happen with the health data. So bad was her tenure in that portfolio that they had to put the member into the witness protection program for failed child safety ministers: the small business portfolio.

Despite the litany of failures she presided over, now this same individual, the member for Waterford, finds herself at the helm of our health system. Heaven help Queenslanders. Heaven help Queenslanders who need and rely on and work in our health system. The member for Waterford should not be allowed anywhere near Queensland Health, yet here she is now running it and already the

problems mount under her watch. The Cairns Private Hospital maternity unit is on the brink of collapse. This has all the hallmarks of the Gladstone bypass ready to play out again. We all know how that ended: 300 days of bypass and counting.

If the minister does not act now, this will be on her and it will not end well. The minister told mothers in the Cairns region yesterday not to panic. I have some news for this minister: under this government they are already panicked, and so are the staff at the public hospital. They know what a closure would do. It would overwhelm them. History will repeat itself under this government. They are scared of what could unfold in the coming weeks and months.

The situation with audiology services in Townsville is also deeply troubling. Eighty children have now been caught up in the failures of that hospital, yet the public still does not know what is going on. How widespread is the problem and have children suffered permanent harm or damage? How was the problem allowed to occur in the first place and how is the government going to stop it from ever happening again? The public have a right to know each of those things. That is why the minister needs to ensure the outcomes of the audiology review are made public. It is on the minister now to come clean about what has gone on.

The face may have changed but the problems in Queensland Health remain the same—same faces, same cabinet, same chaos, same crisis and the same Premier. Chaos and crisis reign supreme on the benches opposite, and Queenslanders and our health system are worse for it.