



Speech By  
**Ros Bates**


**MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA**

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Record of Proceedings, 28 November 2023

**MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

**Gold Coast University Hospital**

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (2.27 pm): It has been the worst year in living memory across Queensland Health under the chaos and crisis of the Palaszczuk Labor government. I take no pleasure in saying that just like last year, 2023 has been another horror year in health, only this year things are worse. Queensland's frontline health staff are exhausted, they are battered and they are broken. Many are considering walking away from their professions. The collective feeling of hopelessness and overwhelming fatigue grows deeper with each passing day. The situation is dire, though that fact still seems to be something which is lost on the Palaszczuk government.

I want to talk about the quite shocking scenes last night at the Gold Coast University Hospital. The images were quite disturbing. The minister suggested that I might like to talk to some of the frontline staff at the facility and the minister will be pleased to know that I had. Who the heck does the minister think I was speaking to yesterday? Doctors, nurses and paramedics painted a very different picture to what the minister said in the chamber this morning and these are their words not mine. One said—

There were patients waiting over two hours, and others who waited a lot longer.

Patients were put on trolleys in hallways not in any cubicles, with paramedics looking after them taking their vital signs.

So chaotic was the situation this whistleblower said that men were forced to pass urine in bottles in full view of the entire triage area. That is totally unacceptable and a degrading experience for all involved.

**Ms Fentiman:** That's not true.

**Ms BATES:** I take the minister's interjection that it was not true. Those are the words of the frontline whistleblower. Another said—

Thanks for helping us and the QAS yesterday. Yesterday was horrific.

I will say it again: the nurses said—

Thanks for helping us and the QAS yesterday. Yesterday was horrific.

Another said—

We are so over it. Morale is really poor.

Which account of the situation should Queenslanders trust: the minister's, in a craven effort to save her own political skin, claiming that everything is fine—'Look away, nothing to see over here, shiny bauble'; or a worker on the front line, shattered after the worst year they have seen in the health system, who was a firsthand witness to the chaotic scenes yesterday at the Gold Coast University Hospital emergency department? There is no choice.

With that said, I take this moment to remind the minister that trying to deny, deflect and distract from the problems in the health system is a well-worn path. It is a path the minister's predecessor walked, and we all know how that ended. It is of course strange that the Minister for Health would use the same playbook as the former minister and now Attorney, because the current minister said that she would be different. Well, this minister is different: she is worse. The failure to provide the whole picture, the failure to front up, the failure to follow up: these are the hallmarks of this minister, who is quickly making a name for herself for these traits, along with one new trait which is starting to emerge—an endless line of apologies. Apologies are fine—in fact, they are necessary—but an apology must be followed up by action or otherwise it is just hollow.

The minister is proving that she is not a minister of action; she is a minister for apologies, and the reason is simple: the minister is not focused on the job she has. She is only focused on the job she wants, and that is the Premier's, and that is why Queensland Health is in crisis. The person in charge of steering Queensland's public health system does not have her eye on the ball. She is not across her brief. In the last few weeks alone we have seen the tragic deaths of Wayne Irving and Cath Groom—Wayne, who was ramped, and Cath, whose ambulance never came. We have seen a catastrophic outage of the state's digital medical record. According to the minister, it was just a technical hiccup. Try telling that to the staff who were scrambling for any information they could get for their patients. I am not sure what the minister's idea of a technical hiccup is, but staff scared of overdosing their patient because records were not available but equally frightened a missed medication could cause deterioration of their patient is not my definition of a technical hiccup.

**Mr Crisafulli** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Leader of the Opposition, you are warned under the standing orders.

**Ms BATES:** Clinicians were in uproar when they heard that statement from the minister. With the worst ambulance ramping on record in the country, a surgery waiting list of nearly 60,000 people, a DNA lab mired in a horrible mess and maternity wards still on bypass, the Queensland Health crisis shows no signs of ending. There is only one way to end it: show Labor the door in '24.

*(Time expired)*