




Speech By
Hon. Shannon Fentiman

MEMBER FOR WATERFORD

Record of Proceedings, 12 October 2023

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Rockhampton Hospital, Patient Complaint

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women) (10.41 am): Late yesterday the Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service informed me of a complaint that they had received from a young woman. In early August a young woman presented in the Rockhampton ED, requesting a forensic examination following an alleged rape. It is clear that she did not receive the timely, compassionate, trauma informed care that she was entitled to and expected. The hospital and health service has apologised to the young woman and I would like to also unreservedly apologise to her for the ongoing impact that this incident has had on her. I understand the health service has been providing support to the young woman and her family while they work through the complaint. I have also asked the HHS to extend my offer to meet with the young woman and her family to discuss her experience, if she wishes to do so.

I can confirm that, as a result of that complaint, a number of improved processes have been put in place at the Rockhampton Hospital, including ensuring that social workers are present from the time of presentation and ensuring continuity of care by a specialised nurse and medical officer. As of today, across the Central Queensland HHS there are now 19 available staff who are trained to administer forensic examinations with new rape kits, including nine in Rockhampton. Training for clinicians is ongoing over the coming months to ensure that even more clinicians are qualified. A highly trained nurse practitioner is now coordinating the service and collaborates regularly with the Queensland Police Service to ensure that the services provide supportive care to victim-survivors. Staff at the Rockhampton Hospital also have 24/7 support from the Clinical Forensic Medicine Unit in Brisbane.

I would also like to update the House that, since several matters concerning forensic examinations were raised earlier this week, at my request the acting director-general met with chief executives from all 16 HHSs to ensure that every woman who presents at an ED requiring a forensic examination is treated in a timely and trauma informed way, and that occurred yesterday. Every HHS has an adequate supply of new rape kits and over 180 clinicians have undergone the new training. However, as I said on Tuesday, there is still more to do.

I am committed to continuing to improve our responses to women who have experienced sexual assault and rape and we will continue to implement all of the recommendations from the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce. Yesterday, historic legislation, which includes affirmative consent in our Criminal Code, was introduced. Whenever we talk about sexual assault we need to talk about consent, consent education and prevention. I want to thank that young woman for bravely speaking out about her experience. We have heard you and we are acting.