




Speech By
Hon. Yvette D'Ath

MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

Record of Proceedings, 30 March 2023

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Emergency Departments, Performance

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (11.14 am): As I have said many times, Queensland's emergency departments are facing some of the greatest pressures they have ever seen but, despite this, they are leading the nation in our response. The most recently quarterly data shows that Queensland has now surpassed the performance of New South Wales when it comes to seeing ED patients within the recommended time frames. We are seeing the same percentage of ED patients in the recommended time as were seen in 2014-15 according to the budget papers despite a significant increase in demand. In the same time period we have brought the median ED wait time down from 19 minutes to 16 minutes.

Any attempt to say that people are waiting more than 24 hours to get emergency care is incorrect. They are people who have been clinically triaged and have commenced receiving care within the emergency departments. A patient may stay for longer than 24 hours within the ED for a number of reasons. This may include patients with volatile clinical status requiring repeated adjustments to treatment interventions and clinical decision-making around ongoing care needs and, most appropriately, disposition. There may be other factors including the requirement for a specific type of bed, for example, telemetry, negative pressure, isolation or mental health.

In relation to long waits in our EDs, our ED physicians will always treat the most urgent cases first. Since 2013-14 there has been an increase of over 100 per cent in the presentations of category 1 and 2 patients. The rise in urgency of cases and the reduction in the availability and affordability of primary care means that people who would otherwise have sought care in the community are also now coming to our emergency departments. Despite these challenges, we are making real investments in immediate and long-term improvements to our health system. That includes our record investment in 2,509 new beds through our Queensland Health and Hospitals Plan including 289 fast-tracked beds; investing in the long-stay rapid response program to assist more than 700 long-stay patients in obtaining support in the community rather than staying in hospital; delivering rapid access clinics across the state to prevent re-presentations and readmissions to hospital; providing care closer to home through our Satellite Hospitals Program; ensuring statewide access to the Metro North virtual ED; making a record investment in health services; and delivering on our election commitment to recruit 9,475 new health staff during this term of government, with more than 17,000 having been recruited since 2015.

Queenslanders can always trust the Palaszczuk government to deliver more staff and more beds and to work with our staff and stakeholders, importantly including our consumer advocates, to tackle these health challenges collectively.