




Speech By
Hon. Yvette D'Ath

MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Hospitals

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (9.58 am): Just as Queensland is leading the nation in our economic management, Queensland's hospital system is nation leading. The *Report on government services* for 2021-22 showed that Queensland led the nation for the treatment of elective surgery patients within the recommended time. While we are the busiest Ambulance Service in the country, we beat New South Wales and Victoria when it came to ambulance response times. We are also the only mainland jurisdiction to offer our ambulance services free of charge, something that will never change under a Labor government. In addition, Queensland was the second-best performing—

Ms Palaszczuk: They'd cut it.

Mrs D'ATH: I take that interjection. I have no doubt that it is one of the things those opposite will put on their cuts list. In addition, Queensland was the second-best performing jurisdiction in the treatment of emergency department patients within the recommended time.

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order, Leader of the Opposition.

Mrs D'ATH: I will read that again because those opposite were talking and might not have heard this great news. In addition, Queensland was the second-best performing jurisdiction in the treatment of emergency department patients within the recommended time.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order, members.

Mrs D'ATH: I will say it again for the Leader of the Opposition, who appears to be struggling to hear.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Minister, resume your seat. Members, I am trying to listen to the minister's contribution. The minister is literally the closest person to me in the chamber and I am having difficulty hearing her. I would ask the members to maintain what has been good and orderly decorum up to this point.

Mrs D'ATH: Queensland was the second-best performing jurisdiction in the treatment of emergency department patients within the recommended time. The most recent quarterly data demonstrates that Queensland has now surpassed New South Wales in the timely treatment of ED patients. In the October to December quarter, Queensland emergency departments saw 72 per cent of patients within the recommended time. In New South Wales, in the same period that figure was 66.4 per cent.

Queensland's nation-leading emergency department performance is made all the more impressive by the fact that we have seen demand for the most urgent category 1 and 2 patients increase by more than 100 per cent since we came to government. In the last quarter alone, there was a 12 per cent increase in category 1 emergency department patients compared to the same quarter the year before. When the most urgent cases increase in volume, less urgent cases will need to wait while life-saving treatment is delivered. As an extension of this fact, an increase in complex and acute demand leads to an increase in ambulance lost time. Where patients are transported to hospital via ambulance but are considered less urgent than more acute patients, these patients may receive expert care from our paramedics inside our EDs while they await the assessment of our ED clinicians.

While we are acutely aware of the demand pressures on our public health system, our Queensland Health and Hospitals Plan is working to reduce the time that all patients spend waiting for treatment by delivering 2,509 new hospital beds, 11 hospital expansions, three new hospitals and a new Queensland cancer centre. In addition to new hospitals and hospital beds, our Queensland Health and Hospitals Plan is delivering innovative and expanded services to reduce ED wait times. This includes: embedding the Care4Qld investments on an ongoing basis, including the expanded QAS mental health co-responder model and Hospital in the Home models of care; investing in the Long-Stay Rapid Response Program to ensure long-stay patients are able to obtain support in the community rather than stay 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; and ensuring statewide access to the Metro North Virtual ED.

We are also investing in our frontline workforce, with an increase in the Queensland Health budget of 62 per cent since coming to government. We have been able to deliver an additional 17,000 frontline health staff including more than 10,000 new nurses and midwives, more than 3,000 new doctors and more than 1,000 new ambulance officers. I thank all of our wonderful frontline health workers for the amazing work they do in providing world-class care to Queensland patients day in, day out. My message to them is simple: the Palaszczuk government will always have your back.