




Speech By
Hon. Yvette D'Ath

MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

Record of Proceedings, 19 April 2023

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Princess Alexandra Hospital, Spinal Injuries Unit

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (9.54 am): I want to acknowledge the work of the Palaszczuk government and Minister Grace with her department around what we are doing with respect to health and early intervention and disabilities in our schools. It is so important for the long-term health and wellbeing of our communities.

I know that our Queensland Health staff work incredibly hard every day to provide world-class care to their patients. That is why some of the allegations made regarding patient care at the spinal injuries unit at the PA Hospital were so confronting. Other issues pertaining to the spinal injuries unit like the resources required to deliver services and the scale and quality of infrastructure at the unit are matters that Metro South Hospital and Health Service and Queensland Health have been reviewing on an ongoing basis.

I am advised that practical steps have already been taken this year by Metro South HHS to improve the care environment at the SIU, including the recruitment of clinical and administration staff as well as the purchasing of additional patient equipment. I am also advised that a new quick-start intake model has been stood up. This service seeks to ensure patients can receive early intervention care before getting formally admitted into the ward. However, in order to ensure that Queenslanders living with a spinal injury are receiving the best quality of care possible, Dr David Rosengren, Chief Operating Officer for Queensland Health, will lead an evaluation with both Metro North and Metro South hospital and health services on the clinical models along with the potential relocation of the spinal injuries unit to Surgical Treatment and Rehabilitation Service, STARS, at Herston.

This process will allow Metro South Hospital and Health Service and Queensland Health the time frame necessary to develop the business case and deliver on the redevelopment of the spinal injuries unit at the Princess Alexandra Hospital. Based on and depending on the recommendations of Dr Rosengren, Brisbane would have two tertiary spinal rehabilitation units in South-East Queensland, as well as the one located in Townsville.


In order to guide this work, I have asked that a stakeholder working group be convened to ensure that we are appropriately informed of the lived experiences of patients and staff. I understand that Metro South Hospital and Health Service has already undertaken considerable engagement with stakeholder groups like Spinal Life Australia, and I believe that continuing this collaborative approach is vital as we proceed on this incredibly important body of work.

I also want to address the reports regarding Dr Dinesh Palipana's correspondence to me. As I acknowledged when responding to the media inquiry, my office did receive an email from Dr Palipana. The email addressed issues relating to the infrastructure and resourcing of the unit as well as a specific patient matter. It did not raise the specific allegations relating to patient care that later formed the basis of media reports. As is appropriate, when individual patient matters are raised in correspondence like

Dr Palipana's, the email was referred through to the department and onto Metro South Hospital and Health Service for advice. I am advised that a draft response was to be progressed to me last week and will be provided to me shortly from the HHS.

I want to acknowledge the advocacy of Dr Palipana whom I have met on a number of occasions. I want to acknowledge his great work in the hospital and health service, and I also want to acknowledge the commitment shown by stakeholders across the health system who are working with our hospital and health services to address these complex issues.

Further Answer to Question, Maternity Services, Bypass

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (11.19 am): I rise to make a brief ministerial statement. Further to questions from the opposition this morning with regard to bypass, I can advise that, in providing a response to the Leader of the Opposition's question regarding the units that have been on bypass since June last year, due to the size and scale of the scope of the question, and noting that a unit can be on bypass in some instances for periods less than 24 hours due to illness or unforeseen events, I can currently advise hospitals that have been on bypass for more than 10 days include: Biloela, Chinchilla, Cooktown and Gladstone. I note that this situation would be far worse if 5,035 fewer frontline workers, including 3,270 nurses and midwives and 750 doctors, were not employed this term if the LNP had been elected.