



Speech By  
**Ros Bates**


**MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA**

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Record of Proceedings, 13 February 2024

**MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

**Health System**

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (2.44 pm): It is a new year but it is the same old, tired Labor government mired in chaos and crisis. What has changed? Nothing! Nothing has changed. Queenslanders are rightly saying things are tougher, things are harder and things are getting worse. The issues of cost of living, youth crime and housing are getting worse. In the health portfolio it is no different. It is getting worse. The numbers, the facts, do not lie, and I will come back to that a little later. First and foremost, I want to talk through the explosive documents obtained by the opposition through right to information.

No-one would think that the Minister for Health might actually be focused on healing the health crisis: things like reducing ambulance ramping or driving down elective surgery waiting lists or keeping on top of the number of people spending more than 24 hours in an emergency department. Those are the things that Queenslanders should rightly believe and expect the minister would be addressing in her role. That is not happening and those documents prove that.

Instead of focusing on those things, the things that matter to Queenslanders, the minister is more focused on 'reviewing the existing narrative'. I would love to hear what the minister thinks that statement actually means. Let's face it, we will never get an honest answer so let's call it for what it is. It is the minister trying to fix the image rather than actually fix the problems causing the Queensland health crisis. It is as simple as that and I think any Queenslanders relying on the public health system who hears something like that would be appalled.

I say this to the minister: reviewing the narrative does not do anything for the patients waiting on the ambulance ramp for five hours. Reviewing the narrative does not do anything for the elderly patient waiting years for a knee replacement. Reviewing the narrative does not do anything for the dedicated doctors, nurses, paramedics and allied health professionals who are running our public health system, who are feeling stressed, exhausted and burnt out.

I cannot believe that I am having to spell this out to the minister, but I fear she is losing her grip on being able to objectively understand how dire the situation is across our public health system. I think I know the reason though. The minister is now deluded about the situation because she started to believe her own narrative. In her mind it is all fixed, it is all done, the problem is gone because she will review the narrative. Please! That is as offensive to the patients and the staff relying on and working in our hospital system as it is disturbing. It is disturbing because it gives an insight into the minister's priorities, her focus and her principles. It is the narrative that matters to the minister, not the facts and not the patients.

Let's just run through some of those facts now, the facts which make up the realities of the Queensland health crisis: 43 per cent ambulance ramping as far as we are aware, the worst December quarter on record in Queensland and the worst in the nation. There are now more than 60,000 people

on the elective surgery waiting list—again another record. This is the first time in Queensland's history that the number of people waiting for elective surgery has surpassed 60,000 and there are now more than 291,000 Queenslanders waiting to see a specialist. It is again another unwanted record. For some perspective, in 62 days the number of patients on the waiting list to see a specialist grew by more than 15,500 Queenslanders. These are sobering figures. I have been a keen observer of our state's hospital performance for some time and I have never seen a December quarter quite like this.

Is it any wonder when there is a minister at the helm who is only interested in trying to make things look better than they are; a minister who wants to tell Queenslanders about the built bed numbers, not the ones that are operational; a minister who has the performance data and even gets it weekly according to this RTI, but will only provide it to Queenslanders when it is politically convenient like on a Saturday, hoping to hide, hoping that nobody was watching. We were watching. The narrative and the story that the Premier and the minister are writing is one of an unwanted broken record across Queensland's public health system. Changing the narrative will not heal the health crisis. Changing the government in Queensland will.