




Speech By
Ros Bates

MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA

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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Bates, Mr R

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (2.28 pm): He walked in there a relatively healthy man up until that minor fall and left in a body bag. That is how the family of Russell Bates described what happened to him at Logan Hospital. Clearly Mr Bates did not receive the care that anyone would expect for a loved one in a Queensland hospital in 2024. It is not the fault of the hardworking staff of Logan Hospital. What would we do without them? They are the only ones keeping the broken system together.

The minister today would not even front the media at Logan. Instead she sent out the staff. Clearly something has gone wrong—very wrong. Russell had to wait in a corridor for hours due to ambulance ramping. Even when he was attended to, his family had to plead for more assistance when he continued to deteriorate. Russell was lucky that he had his family close by fighting for him. How many others have not been so lucky?

Russell's treatments were not working. It got to the point where nurses advised the family to call Ryan's Rule to get more help. Again I quote the family—

The nurses were so concerned about Dad. They were running around the hospital looking for people to help him.

Eventually a perforated bowel was discovered; sepsis had set in. Russell's life support system was turned off 12 days after seeking help at Logan Hospital. His family said—

The kidney doctor on day 11 said to us, 'We wish we'd known about this three days ago. He could have had a chance.'

Can you imagine that? Imagine being told, essentially, 'Your dad is going to die, but it could have been avoided.' Now the family must wait for up to two years to get a report from the coroner—two years of uncertainty—so where is the closure for this family? Where is the justice for Russell? I have spoken to this family. The Leader of the Opposition and I met with the family. They are hurt and they are angry. They did not know that their 2023 Christmas with their active, Lego-loving dad and doting grandfather would be their last. The family has said—

Enough is enough, health minister. Steven Miles, fix your system.

They are right: the failures in care received by Russell are just a symptom of a system that is broken.

Queensland Health has deteriorated over many years under various health ministers: it deteriorated when the now Treasurer was minister for health; it deteriorated when the now Attorney-General was minister for health; and it deteriorated when the now Premier was minister for health. We are now up to our fourth health minister under this government. To quote the Leader of the Opposition, 2024 is sounding a lot like 2023. The ministerial titles have changed, but the same failed ministers are sitting around the same cabinet table making the same decisions and refusing to deal with the Queensland health crisis. The family said—

... us speaking out is not going to bring Dad back but how can we get this message out to the health minister, to the government to ensure this doesn't happen to someone else's family? It's got to stop.

That is a cry from a family who feels like the government is not listening to them. I say to the health minister on behalf of the family: will you give Russell's family justice? Will the minister initiate a part 9 investigation to get to the bottom of what went wrong in this case? The family should not have to wait two years. Investigations done behind closed doors with findings that will be kept secret also will not provide comfort for this family. That is why, on behalf of the family, the LNP have asked for a part 9 inquiry and a commitment from this minister that the results will be made public. The minister had an opportunity today to commit to this course. It is a path this minister has so far refused to take, and we have to ask why. Is this minister committed to fixing the health crisis or is this minister more interested in saving her own political skin?

'Let the sunshine in,' called Professor Coaldrake. I do not see sunshine; I see a government that is more interested in operating in the dark. I see a government that is more interested in hiding the truth about what is happening in our hospitals than in saving Queenslanders in their hour of need. The Bates family need answers. They need answers from a minister who cares, not one who sends staff out to bear the brunt of what happened to this family. This should never happen to any family in Queensland. It has to stop.