




Speech By
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Record of Proceedings, 21 May 2024

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Miles Labor Government, Performance

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (2.25 pm): Today I have a few points I want to raise on the performance of the Labor government's management of the health system. To start, I address the minister's claim this morning in an answer to the first question during question time. The minister said words to the effect of the following: 'On every measure the health system is performing to pre-pandemic levels.' I have not yet been able to view the direct quote as *Hansard* is yet to be published, but it was words to that effect. That could not be further from the truth. It is astounding that the minister would ever consider uttering those words. In the very interview in which the minister said the measures she wanted to see return to pre-pandemic levels she referenced three key metrics. They are the same metrics which have always been used in Queensland, and those metric are as follows: ambulance ramping; the elective surgery waiting list; and the waiting list to see a specialist.

The targets the minister set were clear: ambulance ramping would return to the pre-pandemic level of 28 per cent; the elective surgery waiting list would return to the pre-pandemic level of 56,176; and the specialist outpatient waiting list would return to the pre-pandemic levels of 248,905. None of that has happened—none of it. In fact, unbelievably, each of those performance measures has gotten worse—no ifs, no buts. Ramping is now at record highs at 45.5 per cent. There are over 60,000 patients waiting for elective surgery and there are nearly 290,000 patients waiting for an appointment to see a specialist. I repeat this point: not only are those performance measures not at pre-pandemic levels; they are worse than when the minister took over. The minister has made it worse. The three measures the minister herself set as the barometer for her success are worse.

These egregious and very deliberate comments this morning by the minister were blatant mistruths. I urge the minister to correct the record and apologise to the House for making such patently false claims. I also urge the minister to consider whether she is really up to the job. I mentioned the numbers today behind ambulance ramping, but it is so much more than a number. These are people behind those numbers. They are waiting for treatment. They are waiting for care. Last night we learnt that a gentleman sadly lost his life after being ramped for an extended period after arriving at the Gold Coast University Hospital via ambulance. I convey my sincere and heartfelt condolences to the gentleman's family, because these are truly tragic circumstances. I and my colleagues on this side of the chamber feel deeply for them.

I also want to place on record my deep admiration and respect for the staff at GCUH in that ED department who were present at the time of this tragic accident. As ED clinicians, they are trained and they are well equipped to respond to tragic incidents like these, but it does not make it any easier. I am reliably told that the staff are distressed about the circumstances involved. The staff at GCUH are concerned about 'the ramp' in the ED which is effectively a corridor. I have been told by the staff that those patients are often the most unwell in the ED, yet the same whistleblower has said that it is typically up to one nurse to monitor seven or more patients. The staff describe that patients can be moved from a bed space back to the ramping area and that the congestion in this area is a danger to patients and staff.

Staff have also raised concerns that this congestion can impede trauma to the resus area for a trauma response. They have told me that the sheer volume of ramped patients at times can diminish privacy and dignity for those patients who are passing in the resus area. That is not good enough. They are fed up. They are at breaking point. Those ED staff are calling out for help. They say they are sick of bandaid solutions; they want genuine change. The government has long been warned that deaths would occur on ramps or because of ramping. It has now happened twice in only a matter of months. It is not acceptable. It is devastating for the families and staff who are involved. Queenslanders deserve better than this chaos and crisis. The health crisis is deepening under Labor—it is only getting worse—yet this minister and her colleagues continue to keep up the facade that everything is fine. Labor will say and do anything to cling to power. Tragically, it is costing lives.

(Time expired)