



Speech By  
**Hon. Shannon Fentiman**


**MEMBER FOR WATERFORD**

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Record of Proceedings, 16 April 2024

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**Ambulance Service**

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women) (9.58 am): Members of this House have heard me say on many occasions that our health system is under immense pressure. In 2023 our emergency departments saw a record 2.31 million patients. That is approximately 30 per cent higher than when we came to government in 2015. We are not just seeing more patients; we are seeing sicker patients and more patients arrive by ambulance. Ambulance arrivals have increased by almost 40 per cent, with category 1 and 2 patients increasing by more than 60 per cent. Members of this House—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Leader of the Opposition!

**Ms FENTIMAN:** I would have thought the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Mudgeeraba might want to listen to what I am saying about the demand on our health system.

**Mr Bleijie** Interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The member for Kawana will cease his interjections.

**Ms FENTIMAN:** Members of this House will have also heard me speak about how the Queensland Ambulance Service is the best in this country. We have the busiest service, we have the biggest service, but we also have the fastest service. It is the only mainland service that is free—something that will never change under a Labor government.

It does not matter how many times I repeat these facts, the members opposite continue to try to misrepresent these pressures and the achievements of our amazing frontline health workers. Case in point: in the last few weeks the opposition has attempted to use ambulance lost time as a yardstick to measure the pressures our system is under. Queensland Health and the Ambulance Service collect and publish hundreds of points of data about how our system is performing, but QAS total lost time is not one of them because it does not accurately reflect the treatment Queenslanders can expect in our emergency departments. Total lost time does not account for the massive growth in demand and the almost 1,400 additional paramedics we have employed. Average lost time per ambulance is a far better indicator of a patient's experience because it describes how long a patient may expect to wait at the hospital.

For the benefit of those opposite, I am happy to inform them that anyone can easily determine the total number of lost hours when provided with the average lost time per ambulance. All you have to do is multiply the average lost minutes per ambulance by the number of presentations and divide it by 60. If the member for Mudgeeraba cannot figure that out on her own, I have no idea how she is going to run the health system.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Minister, continue with your ministerial statement, please.

**Ms FENTIMAN:** In line with my commitment to more transparent data and so that those opposite do not have to do grade 5 maths, I table an updated copy of my response to question on notice 44.

*Tabled paper:* Answer to question on notice No. 2024-44 asked on 14 February 2024, revised response [564](#).

There is also a range of measures that reflect how our system is performing: the number of patients seen within the clinically recommended time frames—that is improving; length of stay in the ED—that is improving; median wait time—also improving. I am very pleased to let the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Mudgeeraba know that preliminary data indicates in the month of March average lost time per ambulance was down three minutes on the same time the previous year thanks to the hard work of our frontline paramedics, nurses and doctors.

**Ms Bates** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Mudgeeraba, you are warned under the standing orders.

**Ms FENTIMAN:** When I was sworn in as Minister for Health I committed to releasing more transparent, meaningful data about how our health system is responding. We now report on things like tier 3 escalations, the number of long-stay patients in our hospitals and historical trend data on specialist outpatient appointments. I can announce today that from the next quarterly data release we will be publishing average lost time per ambulance.