



Speech By  
**Hon. Shannon Fentiman**


**MEMBER FOR WATERFORD**

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Record of Proceedings, 21 May 2024

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS**

**Gold Coast University Hospital; Hospitals, Performance Data**

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women) (10.11 am): I would like to update the House on the passing of a 78-year-old man at the Gold Coast University Hospital last week. I want to convey my heartfelt condolences to the family for their loss. I am advised that the family has expressed distress at the thought of media coverage and has requested that patient information is not disclosed, and of course I will respect their wishes and treat this matter with sensitivity.

I am advised that the patient was triaged appropriately and assessed immediately on arrival at the emergency department. Dr David Green, the Director of Emergency Medicine at the Gold Coast University Hospital, has said that the department was under immense pressure that afternoon. They had many more patients than anticipated, including three trauma patients requiring complex and urgent care.

Initially, the patient was under the care of experienced paramedics inside the hospital. I want to be clear that no patients are ever left in the back of an ambulance. I understand he was in an ED bed receiving treatment at the time that he suffered a medical episode and received immediate emergency care. For more than 10 hours this gentleman was under the care of our hardworking ED and ICU teams before sadly passing away.

The hospital is undertaking a clinical review and it will help inform details about the appropriateness of the care that he received and whether timeframes could have been improved. I give my commitment to releasing the outcomes of that review once it is finalised. I again want to offer my sincere condolences to the family. I want to thank the frontline paramedics and hospital staff for their incredible work.

Finally, we have released the latest round of hospital performance data for the March quarter. The March quarter was the busiest ever, with over 600,000 people presenting at EDs. That is an extra 370 patients every day in our hospitals compared to this time last year. We have seen figures for the most critical and the most sick patients jump 11 per cent.

In February, the Queensland Ambulance Service experienced the most triple-O calls ever in a single day. This demand was driven by a perfect storm of floods, heatwaves, cyclones and a surge in RSV, flu and COVID. What this data also shows is that our investments are working. Despite the unprecedented demand on almost every metric, we have seen an improvement. Our hardworking health staff delivered a record 37,000 elective surgeries and eight in 10 were seen in the recommended timeframes—both improvements. The long waitlist for surgeries has fallen a massive 38 per cent and some hospitals, like Bundaberg, have now cleared their entire surgery long waitlist. They are now at zero.

There were 23,000 more emergency department patients seen in recommended timeframes which is an improvement on last year. Despite this extra pressure, the median ED wait time remains 16 minutes. There are more than 4,000 people who have been transferred off an ambulance stretcher within 30 minutes compared to this time last year. While a perfect storm of external factors in January and February did result in a slight decline in our patient off-stretcher time, as an overall percentage—

**Mr Crisafulli:** Worst ever!

**Ms FENTIMAN:** What the Leader of the Opposition will not tell you, Mr Speaker, is that that bounced right back in March. I want to thank the hardworking staff for all of their incredible work, to take a surge in patients. Finally, for the benefit of the House, I would like to table new data comparing Queensland's patient off-stretcher performance with comparable statistics using the state's own methodologies to measure performance.

*Tabled paper:* Document, undated, titled 'National POST Comparison' [815](#).

Contrary to the opposition's claims about Queensland's national performance, I thought it was really important to put in context how Queensland was performing compared to every other state. We know Queensland has the busiest and best-performing ambulance service in the nation. It is the only one that is free in mainland Australia—something that will never change under a Labor government. The results show that Queensland is outperforming South Australia, Tasmania and Victoria by as much as 16 per cent. That is testament to the incredible work of our paramedics and our emergency department clinicians.