



Speech By
Hon. Tim Nicholls

MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Federal Labor Government, Aged Care

 **Hon. TJ NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (9.40 am):
At the outset, I associate myself with the comments of the Premier in relation to the tragic passing of Mr Ian Leavers who, like many in this House, I knew well.

Nobody wants to stay in hospital longer than necessary, but with a growing and aging population we are seeing more patients stranded in our hospitals because they cannot access timely aged-care or disability supports. Quite clearly, the former Labor government did not take up the fight for Queenslanders and Queensland patients.

This is the case for patients like Denise Mcauley who has been stranded in Logan Hospital since June. Denise's daughter Liana is here in the gallery with us today in her continued advocacy for her mother. Denise has been in Logan Hospital for over 140 days—that is 140 days that her family has been looking for a new long-term home for Denise. While she waits she is being cared for 24/7 by the staff at the Logan Hospital. Liana has written to the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission and several federal ministers to seek help for her mum, but the Albanese government continue to ignore the human cost of their failures. That human cost is being paid by Denise Mcauley and her family—in the heart of the federal Treasurer's electorate.

The Commonwealth has dropped the ball in its area of responsibility—that is, providing aged-care facilities. The result is that the state's hospitals are bearing the brunt—the brunt of stranded patients, and Queensland is ground zero in Australia. At the end of August, there were 1,126 Queenslanders like Denise stranded in hospitals. These patients represent almost 10 per cent of all our hospital beds. That is a hospital the size of the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital out of commission every day of the year.

Queensland is not alone. Stranded patients are hurting health systems across the country. Health ministers, including Labor ministers from South Australia, New South Wales and Western Australia, stood with me in Perth to take this failure up to the Commonwealth. This failure means pressure mounts everywhere else in our hospitals. It slows patients moving from EDs to wards and increases ambulance ramping. It congests the system and, most importantly, it is unsafe for patients. It is not the care they neither need nor deserve.

This issue is not the fault of patients. The fault lies squarely at the feet of the Commonwealth. While the Commonwealth dithers, in Queensland we have been pulling every lever possible to improve ambulance ramping, including: the 2,600 beds that will be delivered under the Hospital Rescue Plan; an \$80 million investment in transit lounges in our state's busiest EDs; and \$270 million for the announcement of nine new CT and six new MRI scanners throughout the state. As we will not ignore patients like Denise, Queensland is also fully funding 515 interim care beds at a cost of \$581 million over two years.

We are prepared to talk to the Commonwealth. We are prepared to negotiate, but the Commonwealth must step up and come to the party. The Crisafulli LNP government is doing the heavy lifting and it is time the federal government started doing some lifting itself for the sake of patients like Denise Mcauley and the thousand more who are stranded in our hospitals.