

8 June 2023

The Hon Shannon Fentiman MP
Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services
Minister for Women
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By email: [REDACTED]

Subject: Media reports regarding compassionate care at Ipswich Hospital

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Dear Minister

You will have read recent media reports about a tragic case concerning a woman who had recently miscarried and sought health care at Ipswich Hospital. On behalf of its members, AMA Queensland expresses its heartfelt sympathy for the patient concerned and her family. This is not acceptable health care in a state as wealthy as Queensland.

Doctors from the hospital have contacted us distressed at associated media reporting that implies the failures were caused by a lack of compassionate care by frontline staff. They also feel insulted that the focus has been put on developing staff guidelines for women who miscarry rather than the current realities of emergency departments at Ipswich and across the state.

Our highly professional and dedicated nurses, doctors and health workers know how to treat patients who suffer the tragedy of a miscarriage. They are working themselves to breaking point under a hospital system that is failing patients and themselves. Many feel the reports are shifting the blame to frontline staff rather than the systemic failures caused by years of inadequate planning and investment.

Our emergency departments, including that at Ipswich Hospital, are overwhelmed. There are not enough beds and often no available in-patient beds to which patients can be transferred out of ED. This means waiting rooms are overflowing and patients who should otherwise be in an ED bed cannot access one. We understand this was the situation at Ipswich Hospital at the time this patient sought care.

We acknowledge the media may misinterpret statements made by government ministers and executives and that this may have occurred in recent news reports. Health workers across Queensland, however, are resigning from practice at a time when we desperately need more of them. They need to trust and feel supported by their Queensland Health Executives, HHS executives and government leaders and know they will not be blamed for failings beyond their control.

We urge you to consider their concerns and would welcome an opportunity to discuss them with you further.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

Dr Maria Boulton
President
AMA Queensland

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Dr Brett Dale
Chief Executive Officer
AMA Queensland

Copied to: Ms Hannah Bloch, Chief Executive, West Moreton HHS: [REDACTED]