



Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance  
Services  
Minister for Women

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President  
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- 1 AUG 2023

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Dear Dr Boulton

*Maria*

Thank you for your letter dated 8 June 2023, co-signed by Dr Brett Dale, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Medical Association Queensland in relation to media reports regarding compassionate care at the Ipswich Hospital. I apologise for the delay in responding.

I share your concerns on this issue and was equally saddened for the woman, her family and the clinicians involved. Since my appointment as the Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women, I am acutely aware of the exceptional work that our healthcare professionals do every day. I am impressed by the dedication of the healthcare workforce who have been through so much in recent years, resolute during the COVID-19 pandemic in their commitment to keeping Queenslanders safe and reducing the spread of the COVID-19, which is now in its recovery phase. I concur your sentiments around the media and their continued devaluing of the great healthcare provided across the state each day and the continued vilification of our staff.

More than 12.5 million patient services are undertaken in the Queensland public health system on average each year, with the vast majority resulting in excellent patient outcomes. I acknowledge that Queensland is not unique, all health systems around the world experience clinical incidents however, Queensland Health is proud to have a strong patient safety culture that actively encourages staff to report clinical incidents; and a system in place that ensures staff actively learn and work to prevent future occurrences. To this end, Queensland Health strives to continually enhance and improve services, including implementing any learnings arising from patient experiences.

Additionally, Queensland Health is committed to growing and supporting our healthcare workforce and aims to ensure that our clinical, operational, administrative and ambulance staff are empowered and valued, wherever they work and whatever team they work within. It is important for our healthcare workforce to be safe, secure and successful because the workforce is trusted by, and cared about, by all Queenslanders. It is critical that a system is in place that ensures frontline staff have the resources they need, so they can continue to provide the best possible care into the future.

I appreciate the work the Australian Medical Association Queensland does to highlight these issues our doctors face and I would encourage any staff member, to speak to their line manager if they have feedback, both positive and negative about their workplace.

I acknowledge that staff in emergency departments face challenges associated with managing high-volume workloads and competing priorities and demands. They also face situations where decisions and actions need to be made quickly and where delaying decisions can have significant consequences for patients.

The Palaszczuk Government acknowledges the pressures and demands being experienced by clinicians within the public health system. Increasing demands are a whole-of-hospital issue, requiring equal focus on inpatient bed management, discharge practices and hospital substitution models. Under the Putting Patients First Plan, the Government is investing \$764 million focussing on providing alternatives to emergency departments, in virtual care, the Queensland Ambulance Service, investments in frontline health workers and more beds across the system.

Thank you again for writing to me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shannon Fentiman', written in a cursive style.

**Shannon Fentiman MP**  
Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services  
Minister for Women  
Member for Waterford