




Speech By
Ros Bates

MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Member for Mudgeeraba, Qualifications

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (11.46 am): The Labor Party and its QNU mates have seen fit to dispute my qualifications to speak in this place on matters concerning the nursing profession. They were undoubtedly inspired by a desire to protect their Queensland Nurses Union colleagues from the damning speech I made in the House demonstrating their commitment to partisan politics above all and certainly above the welfare of their members—the hardworking nurses of Queensland who day after day commit themselves to the health and wellbeing of their patients.

The Labor Party asserts I was putting myself forward incorrectly as a currently registered nurse in an attempt to enhance my credentials to speak on issues affecting nurses. In response to that I state that my reference to registered nurse was referring to the fact that I had been a registered nurse for some 30 years prior and that I was currently eligible to be registered as same. It was in no way a representation of my registration or not. Regardless, this is a ludicrous claim. I do not need to fraudulently enhance my standing in this regard.

I have been a registered nurse, either as a state enrolled nurse or a registered general nurse, for some 30 years. Not only that, I am a decorated nurse in Australia and I have been awarded a few citations. Some of these awards include Queensland Telstra Business Woman of the Year (AusIndustry) as the General Manager of the Wesley Gold Coast Hospital; the Australian Council on Healthcare Standards Quality Award 2000; the Australian Private Hospitals Individual Achievers Award 2000; the Royal Australian College of Nursing Queensland Chapter Distinguished Service Award 2001; and the Prime Minister's Centenary of Federation Medal for services to the Australian community in health in 2003. The QNU's attempt to downgrade my experience and recognised professional history as a registered nurse is farcical. It is demeaning. It is disrespectful not only to me but also to all nurses, registered or otherwise, and shows the disregard the Labor Party holds for all nurses.

On each occasion I was referring to my extensive experience and the qualifications I have held from time to time. I was not referring to my state of registration at the relevant time regarding which an application for re-registration is currently being assessed by AHPRA. Speaking of AHPRA, I received a letter from them which I now table.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 30 July 2013, to Ms Bates from Matthew Hardy on behalf of the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency [\[3148\]](#).

AHPRA now consider this matter closed. In fact, let me read from the letter. It states—

I appreciate your responses to the matters raised ... I accept that you intended to make references to having been a registered nurse and to having had completed the required qualifications. I also acknowledge your statement that you have not provided nursing care ...

The final word is that as far as they are concerned this matter is now closed.

I am entitled to be a registered nurse, a general nurse, in the state of Queensland. I did not reapply for my certificate to practise as I did not, at the time, feel I had the ability to fulfil the continuing medical education program required to practise clinically. I have subsequently been advised by AHPRA that I am eligible to be registered and, furthermore, any irregularity with my registration at the relevant time does not give rise to a breach of any regulations. As I said, I deny that there was a breach as I had not practised any clinical nursing care, and that fact is accepted by AHPRA.

I have a diploma as a state enrolled nurse and a diploma as a general nurse which give rise to my capacity to be registered for which I have held registration and at no time was I referring to holding current registration. I respect the different skills and experience that the various members of parliament bring to their representation of their electorate and to the parliament. Together we contribute to the collective good. The way this matter has been prosecuted by the QNU and the Labor Party, devoid of any forensic analysis and with a small-minded pursuit based on unfounded allegations, is at the very least petty and displays a deplorable disregard for all nurses, registered or otherwise. It is important that people cannot simply claim to be a medical practitioner without adequate qualifications. These rules exist so that patients can be confident that if they are to be treated by a nurse or a doctor or a specialist, they are being treated by someone adequately trained to do so. It is about confidence and about maintaining the integrity of the aforementioned professions.

What it is not about is giving the Labor Party and the QNU an avenue for petty political point-scoring. These rules were not set up to ensure that I could not preface a statement I make in this place with 'as a registered nurse'. To say so, firstly, does not indicate my current registration but serves to give context to what I am about to say. It certainly does not put patients at risk, which is why the rules exist in the first place. As already stated clearly, the QNU was motivated not to protect the wellbeing of Queensland residents or maintain the integrity of Queensland Health professionals, but to score points as they continue to spread falsehoods regarding the future of our hospitals and the future of front-line staff in Queensland Health.

(Time expired)