



Speech by

Miss FIONA SIMPSON

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

Hansard 6 August 1998

HOSPITAL WAITING LISTS

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochydore—NPA) (10.21 a.m.): I am rising in this place to table a document, and I find it rather curious that the new Health Minister is silent on the issue of the good job that the coalition did in reducing hospital waiting times in this State. It is interesting that she has gone quiet. This is the document that she released last week, and I seek to table this document because it proves what we have been saying: we had a plan and we were delivering on that crucial area of improving hospital waiting times.

I am very concerned by the Minister's press statement which foreshadows worsening waiting times under Labor. Obviously, this Government does not have the stomach to keep its eye on the ball and make sure that critical waiting times are kept down. But let us not forget that Labor had the worst waiting list times in Australia and, under two years of the coalition Government, we went to having the best waiting list times in Australia. This is an issue on which the Government must keep its eye on the ball because, if it does not stay focused on it, those good achievements will go back down the gurgler.

In Townsville we went from having something like 62% of people under the Labor Party system in Category 2—semi-urgent surgery—waiting longer than they should have had to down to 6.1% under the coalition. At Nambour it went from 25% down to 0.08%. At Cairns, 45% of people were waiting longer than clinically acceptable. That has gone down to 0.8%. It is curious that this Minister has not tabled this document, because it proves exactly what we were saying.

I also want to note the Minister's comments on the radio this morning. We should pay tribute to the previous Health Minister for the good deal that he did for Queensland, because not only did we get an extra \$103m from the \$120m incentive bonus pool, we signed an agreement under which we were guaranteed in a letter from the Prime Minister an increased share of the agreement.

Time expired.
