



Speech by

**Hon. MERRI ROSE**

**MEMBER FOR CURRUMBIN**

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Hansard 12 November 1998

**QUEENSLAND HEALTH**

**Hon. M. ROSE** (Currumbin—ALP) (Minister for Emergency Services) (6.30 p.m.): What we are debating tonight is not a health crisis overtaking Queensland's public hospital system. The member for Maroochydore has moved a motion in this House that reflects a complete amnesia—or is it hypocrisy—that has overtaken the National and the Liberal Parties. The member for Maroochydore has dragged the Gold Coast Hospital into a motion that seeks to create enormous alarm in our community. We have a campaign of lies, misinformation and untruth being propounded by the members opposite. I will not back away from the fact that the Gold Coast Hospital has problems.

**Mr Nelson** interjected.

**Mrs ROSE:** Is the member for Tablelands listening to me? I repeat: I am not backing away from the fact that the Gold Coast Hospital has problems. However, what we need in this debate are some facts, not distortions and not misrepresentations. Yes, there are problems. I know about those problems, because for the past two years I have been hearing them first-hand from the people on the Gold Coast. Since late last year, I have had dozens of people approach my office, people who have been waiting for years on hospital waiting lists and people who have been waiting for months just for an appointment to see a specialist to get onto a waiting list. The Gold Coast Hospital has one of the longest waiting lists in this State. All that time, through all those battles, did the then Government listen to the fact that there was a problem? Would it listen to me? Would the then Health Minister listen to the problems on the Gold Coast? No! All that time, through all those battles, they would not listen to me. They said that there were no problems at the Gold Coast Hospital. They kept saying, "No, everything is fine." They said that there were no waiting lists under the previous Government, that everything was fine. They said that I was just scaremongering. The previous Minister for Health, the member for Toowoomba South, said that I was scaremongering because I said that the Gold Coast had the longest waiting list in the State. Would he listen? No. He accused me of frightening the Gold Coast community.

Everything was not right. It is true that the problems have not been fixed in four months of a Labor Government. It is true that the Minister for Health—God bless her—is not a miracle worker but, by God, she has done more in the past four months for the Gold Coast Hospital than the member for Toowoomba South did in two years. This Minister, Wendy Edmond, is confronting hard problems and starting to tackle them. On the Gold Coast, she has already set up a high level working party of senior hospital staff to consider how best to meet future demand. That working party, the Resource Assessment Project Team, will report to the Minister before Christmas with recommendations regarding future resource growth needs for the Gold Coast health district for the next five years. That is doing something constructive. That is actually taking the problem seriously and trying to do something about it.

It does not stop there. This Government recognises that the Gold Coast Hospital is under pressure, so what did we do? Labor's Health budget provided an extra \$6m for the Gold Coast health district over last year's budget. The Gold Coast Hospital got an additional \$2.5m in growth funding. What did it get under the coalition? It got no growth funding in 1996-97, and \$1m last year—one miserable million dollars. Where was the AMA and the outcry then? It was nowhere to be seen. What happened to the only doctor who did speak out, Dr Charles Denaro? He disappeared.

**Mr Nuttall:** He got the flick.

**Mrs ROSE:** He got the flick. They disappeared him! This Government has increased——  
Time expired.