



Speech by

PETER WELLINGTON

MEMBER FOR NICKLIN

Hansard 17 November 1998

HEALTH AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—IND) (3.57 p.m.): I rise to speak in support of the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I note that the member for Maroochydore says that the Opposition will be supporting the proposal contained in the Bill relating to the Cancer Register but not that part of the Bill that relates to the role of the Chief Health Officer. The member for Maroochydore says that the role of the Chief Health Officer must be properly considered and not rushed. What absolute rubbish!

The member for Maroochydore has not considered, or does not know, that the Health Bills Committee, set up by the former coalition Minister and chaired by the member for Burleigh, considered this matter. The member for Burleigh said—

"I point out that the bureaucracy of the Health Department previously presented this option to the former Health Minister and after due consideration and consultation with his Bills Committee and other community representatives the option was soundly rejected."

It is quite clear from this that the shadow Minister is not aware of her own party's previous position on this matter. If she were, she would not be putting forward a proposition that has already been axed by her own party. I believe that this matter has received the proper consideration necessary in regard to the role of the Chief Health Officer.

The member for Maroochydore also claims that the Bill is a potential conflict of interest and would compromise health standards. This is nonsense. I have been informed that the current arrangements in the Health Department allow a number of duties to be delegated to departmental officers by the Chief Health Officer. Yet when the departmental officers report back, they do not report back to the Chief Health Officer who delegated the duties to them; they report back to the chief executive officer. In my mind, I believe that this reporting arrangement is unacceptable, and I believe that the proposal contained in the Bill improves the accountability process in the Health Department. I commend the Bill to the House.
