



Speech by

**Mr T. SULLIVAN**

**MEMBER FOR CHERMSIDE**

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Hansard 16 September 1998

### **CENSURE OF MINISTER FOR HEALTH**

**Mr SULLIVAN** (Chermside—ALP) (6.19 p.m.): I second the amendment moved by the Minister for Health. On this issue, unfortunately, we have seen some of the grossest hypocrisy displayed in this House by members opposite, including the member for Toowoomba and the member for Maroochydore. Let us consider what was proposed for the Maryborough Hospital from the word go. The current Minister proposed that, after absolutely no action for two years by the former National Party Minister, this Government would get on with the \$17m redevelopment of the Maryborough Hospital. The colleagues of the member who moved this motion should recognise that, for two years, nothing was done. It had been talked about for two years. As there was no action, staff were becoming unsettled. When the current Minister was in Maryborough, staff asked her to make a decision and to get on with the redevelopment. The previous coalition Government froze the development, as was their wont. Just before the election, they quickly bulldozed the car park to pretend that something was happening. They have built more hospital car parks than they have built hospital facilities up to this stage. It is amazing that those responsible for the betrayal of Queenslanders for their lack of handling of the health system during their time in office are the ones now claiming betrayal of the people of Maryborough. What a hide! Unfortunately, this is what we have come to expect from the shallow, short-sighted and simplistic members opposite who can see only as far as the next election. This cheap political point scoring and trying to scapegoat others for their incompetence shows cowardice and their own breast beating.

Unfortunately, what we are seeing is the pathetic, juvenile and irresponsible behaviour demonstrated by the Opposition spokesperson for Health, the member for Maroochydore. The member is responsible for taking politics in Queensland to an all-time low. Her statements in Maryborough advocating the running out of town of honest, hardworking and committed local people are abhorrent. Threatening suggestions like that do nothing for the sensible and rational discussion of the issues or the exploration of an appropriate response. It is deliberately inflammatory. It encourages the vilification of locals who have a constitutional right of freedom of association. It encourages—and did encourage—harassment. That sort of behaviour is totally unacceptable. The member for Maroochydore should be ashamed of herself. I do not know of what she was thinking in plumbing those depths of political opportunism.

As if it were not enough that she took such a stand in the first place, she continues to pursue an agenda that supports and encourages antagonistic behaviour in this House by repeating her comments yesterday. Worse still, the member, egged on by her colleagues and other shameless political novices, continued to peddle misinformation which she knows to be wrong. Earlier, the Minister challenged her to table the full memo, the top of which was cut off to distort the message. She has not had the honesty to say what was in that complete memo. Her actions have spread fear in the Maryborough community. It is unfortunate that some members opposite have swallowed that misinformation. It is a shame that some members opposite were not here over the past two years to have heard some of the shameless statements made by the former Health Minister, which, by the coalition's own documentation, were shown to be untrue. Through repetition, the lies have become the truth. When will this campaign end?

**Mr Seeney** interjected.

**Mr SULLIVAN:** I have been asked whether I have visited Maryborough. Yes, twice I went to the South Burnett and Maryborough area and spoke to physicians and health staff——

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Chermside will address the Chair.

**Mr SULLIVAN:** I may assure the members that, yes, I have visited the area and spoken to health workers and staff in that area on at least two occasions. Over seven years, I have sat down with health planners in this State. I have come to recognise that some of the things that the former Health Minister and current shadow Minister are saying are absolutely untrue. It is that sort of opportunistic political grab for headlines that is unfortunately spreading misinformation and bringing others into disrepute. It is the sort of activities pursued by shameless people in and associated with the Wide Bay region that demean this House.

**Mr Horan** interjected.

**Mr SULLIVAN:** The member for Toowoomba South has again betrayed what I have said. It is his actions that have brought some of the people in the area into disrepute. He has fed them lies. He knows they are lies. Unfortunately, they have believed him.

As promised, the Maryborough Hospital will be a major regional hospital under the Labor Government. It will provide a wider range of services. It will be a source of pride to the local members and the citizens who are proud members of the Maryborough community.

Time expired.

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