



Speech by

Mr T. SULLIVAN

MEMBER FOR CHERMSIDE

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METROPOLITAN HOSPITALS PLAN

Mr SULLIVAN (Chermside—ALP) (11.21 p.m.): The dilapidated Queensland hospital system needed to be rebuilt, and early in this decade the Goss Government started on a 10-year \$1.5 billion plan to do that. In 1994-95, two years of consultation resulted in the metropolitan hospitals plan, which referred to the need to move beds from the centre of the city to where the population was living. It was decided to move beds to the Redlands area, and in recent years this has been done. It was decided to move to the Princess Alexandra Hospital, and in recent years this has been done. It was also decided to move beds to the north side of Brisbane, to the Prince Charles Hospital, but this has not been done.

Honourable members will recall that in July 1995 the Goss Government went to the election with a plan for and a commitment to moving community services to the Prince Charles Hospital and to rebuilding the hospital accordingly. But an act of betrayal occurred between March and July 1996. North side residents are aware that in February 1996 the Government changed. Under the leadership of Rob Borbidge and Joan Sheldon, Mike Horan became the Health Minister. One of the first acts of this new Minister was to review the bed numbers for the metropolitan hospitals plan. He basically gave in to the AMA Mafia at the Royal Brisbane Hospital. Dana Wainwright and some of her crew forced him to give in to what they wanted. They brought bed numbers back to the RBH and, in an act of betrayal of north side residents, did not even announce this change.

North side residents and patients have lost general medical surgical services, a Level 4 public emergency department and some ambulatory and allied health services. Under the Goss Government, north side residents were going to get local treatment for local people. The area contains a lot of older residents, who have greater need for access to public health services as they get older. The north side of Brisbane, around the Chermside area, has one of the highest percentages of people aged over 60 in all of Australia. That is why the metropolitan hospitals plan was going to move those services to that area.

In an act of utter betrayal, the Borbidge/Sheldon/Horan trio took those services away and, in a most cowardly fashion, did not announce one thing to the north side population. In fact, they removed the regional authorities and the regional directors just before they made this decision. That left no-one to fight any rearguard action or to put a contrary viewpoint. By taking away the regional authorities and by removing the regional directors from their positions, a state of confusion and transition applied within the department which allowed this act of betrayal to continue.

The new buildings that have been built on the Prince Charles Hospital campus will simply be a relocation of the existing services. The north side residents who believed they would have better access to services have been betrayed. They will still have to go to RBH. They will still have to fight the traffic along Bowen Bridge Road to get in to visit patients. I know that people on the north side of Brisbane will not forget the betrayal of the Borbidge/Sheldon/Horan trio.
