



Speech by

Hon. WENDY EDMOND

MEMBER FOR MOUNT COOT-THA

Hansard 27 August 1998

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Co-location of Public and Private Hospitals

Hon. W. M. EDMOND (Mount Coot-tha— ALP) (Minister for Health) (9.50 a.m.), by leave: I rise to advise the House of my approval for Queensland Health to proceed with negotiations over co-locating private hospitals on public hospital sites. I want to make it clear that I have decided to allow exclusive dealings to commence with the preferred proponents now that I am satisfied of the public benefit of these projects. Briefly, the projects represent around \$150m in benefits to the Queensland Government and almost 3,500 jobs in the construction of the new hospitals. The benefits will include—

- a broader variety of services on the one campus;
- better teaching and medical research opportunities;
- economies for Queensland Health in the purchase and use of expensive medical equipment;
- potential earnings for Queensland Health in providing services to the private hospitals;
- training and employment opportunities for Queensland Health employees; and
- a greater choice for public and private patients.

The proposed projects are—

- a co-located hospital built by the Holy Spirit/Sisters of Charity Consortium at the Prince Charles Hospital site at Chermside;
- co-location of the St Andrews War Memorial Hospital at Spring Hill to a new facility at the Herston Hospital Complex;
- co-location of the Ramsay Health Care Group's Greenslopes Private Hospital to a new facility at the Princess Alexandra Hospital; and
- a new private hospital run by the Sisters of Mercy, operators of the Mater, on the site of the Redland Hospital.

I have never opposed any of these co-locations publicly. I have always supported them in principle, but sought to make sure that there was a public benefit, as should be expected by any Queensland Government. I have advised the chief executives of the organisations involved that Queensland Health will deal exclusively with them as the preferred proponents. In fact, discussions are already under way over the Redland Hospital.

My re-examination of these proposals has not just been a political exercise by a new Government. This is proven by my decision to accept the same advice from Queensland Health as my predecessor, the member for Toowoomba South, and to allow the negotiations to proceed. However, my chief concerns have been to establish a clear public benefit and to provide the proponents with a decision as soon as possible so that we do not have a blanket freeze on major capital works—as we saw under the previous Government—delaying important Health projects. No blanket capital works freeze for this Health Minister!

Pending the outcome of the negotiations between Queensland Health and the proponents, I propose to return to Cabinet early next year to seek approval for finalised agreements. I will do so completely convinced that those co-locations will deliver significant benefits to Queensland's health care consumers and to our public health care system.