



Speech by

Miss FIONA SIMPSON

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

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MOUNT LOFTY NURSING HOME

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochydore—NPA) (10.19 a.m.): The Labor Government's moves to evict 14 frail aged nursing home patients from their long-time home in Toowoomba smack of political payback of the dirtiest kind. This is one of the most diabolical and callous actions that this Labor Government could take against the most vulnerable members of the community. The Health Minister, Wendy Edmond, took away \$350,000 in aged care funds from the Mount Lofty Nursing Home, which the coalition had allocated on the advice of the department to bring it up to standard. After seven months as Health Minister, Mrs Edmond has suddenly decided that there is an urgent need to close those beds, with no prior consultation with staff or patients, and no attempt to put in the money to maintain those much-needed local nursing home beds.

It seems that the Labor Government can find \$600,000 for ministerial office upgrades, but when it comes to these frail aged men, who are all in their eighties and nineties, the Government has different priorities—the wrong priorities. The Government plans to farm out these elderly men to different parts of the district, even though there is only one other nursing home bed available in the district at the moment, which I believe is at Oakey.

There is still a need for those nursing home beds in Toowoomba. This comes only two weeks after the sacking of the top three Health officials in Toowoomba. The Toowoomba community must be wondering what the Labor Government has in store for it next. Mrs Edmond is out of control in this portfolio. The Minister has shown how desperate she is by abusing patients who have had to wait too long for surgery, sacking staff and closing hospital beds, and now she is picking on the elderly in a most disgraceful act. Newspaper reports suggest that the Premier may overturn his Health Minister's decision. For the sake of these elderly men, we again urge him to do so.
