



Speech by

## Miss FIONA SIMPSON

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

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Hansard 3 March 1999

### MINISTER FOR HEALTH

**Miss SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—NPA) (10 15 a.m.): Health Minister Wendy Edmond is dangerously out of touch with and out of control of her portfolio. Her recent blunder in Bundaberg highlights this.

This Labor Minister is downgrading a hospital service at Bundaberg, a town with no bulk-billing for the poorer families in town, by removing the general outpatients clinic. However, last week when Minister Edmond was visiting Bundaberg, she denied that this service was closing and told local media—

"Certainly it is not appropriate and is not best health care for everybody who needs minor health care to go to the emergency department."

The problem is that the Minister signed a letter to me three days beforehand confirming her Government's intention to cease this service and to put those patients through the emergency department.

I am calling on Premier Beattie to sack this incompetent Minister for the sake of Queenslanders' health. I am also calling on the Premier to guarantee Bundaberg residents that they will have their general outpatients clinic restored. If the Premier doubts his Minister's incompetence, I suggest that he tune in to the parliamentary television network at 12.30 this afternoon on Channel 4 to view the local Channel 7 news segment which recorded his senior Minister's case of foot in mouth.

Bundaberg has seen semi-urgent surgery wait times more than double since this Labor Minister took the helm. As at July 1999, 11.8% of Bundaberg patients were waiting longer than the clinically acceptable 90 days. Now, on the latest elective surgery figures, 25.2% are waiting too long. In the past few days, the hospital has also lost a well-regarded medical superintendent, who has resigned.

This Labor Minister does not know what is happening in the public hospital system and obviously does not even know what she is signing, as she progressively downgrades services across the State. I suggest that members tune in to the "woes of Wendy" at 12.30 today on the parliamentary network.

Time expired.

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