



Speech by

# Miss FIONA SIMPSON

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

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Hansard 9 March 1999

## MINISTER FOR HEALTH

**Miss SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—NPA) (10.17 a.m.): Today, Health Minister Wendy Edmond stands condemned for her disgraceful and weak decision to remove the district manager, the director of medical services and the director of nursing at the Toowoomba Hospital. In common with many hospitals across the State, the Toowoomba Hospital is facing a massive \$7m budget blow-out this financial year. Instead of taking responsibility for the financial crisis that is gripping Queensland's public hospitals, the Health Minister has decided to make senior hospital staff the scapegoats for her gross incompetence. It is an absolute disgrace that dedicated senior hospital staff are now being sacrificed by the Health Department to prop up the most abysmal Health Minister this State has ever seen.

Queensland now has a Health Minister who, in just six months, has almost doubled the long waits for semi-urgent elective surgery, a Health Minister who in the first quarter of this financial year could spend only \$77m of the \$621m Hospital Rebuilding Program budget, a Health Minister who, after inheriting the best public hospital system in Australia, has already put the State's hospitals \$50m in the red, and the budget blow-out is continuing to grow. While the hospital budgets blow out and public hospitals continue to cut services and reduce surgery, this Minister looks around for someone else to blame. The buck stops with the Health Minister and it is about time that the Premier took action and appointed someone to the Health portfolio who is up to the job, because clearly this Minister is well and truly out of her depth.

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