



Speech by

Miss FIONA SIMPSON

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

Hansard 10 March 1999

MINISTER FOR HEALTH

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochydore—NPA) (10.16 a.m.): Days after celebrating International Women's Day, Health Minister, Wendy Edmond, has undermined the status of women by pleading for leniency on the basis of her gender. Mrs Edmond's woeful performance in her portfolio is the reason she is under attack in the Parliament, not because she is a woman. No coalition member has called this Health Minister a "dog", as Labor Minister Bob Gibbs did when he attacked a female coalition Minister. Mrs Edmond has been judged on her handling of her portfolio and her ability has been found to be wanting.

There is a \$50m blow-out in hospital budgets and nearly a doubling of the wait times for semi-urgent surgery under this Labor Minister. The Minister is sacking staff, closing hospital beds and abusing patients such as the Gold Coast man who waited more than 28 hours for surgery to a badly slashed arm. The Minister called him a drunk. She has also gagged union officials and other staff members throughout Queensland Health. We see in the Gold Coast media today that there are official guidelines that state that staff are not allowed to speak to the media—not allowed to talk about the problems in the hospitals.

I never thought in this day and age that I would hear a senior female Labor Minister pleading that she was being picked on for being a woman and that the Opposition should go easy on her. There are a number of weak Ministers, some of whom are women and many of whom are men, in this can't do Beattie Government. It is an insult to all women that Health Minister, Wendy Edmond, after scapegoating hospital staff and patients for her mismanagement now adds the status of women to her list of victims. Minister Edmond wants the Opposition members to let her off the hook for her incompetence. This is not going to happen. If she cannot stand the heat, she should get out of the kitchen.
