



Speech by

Miss FIONA SIMPSON

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

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HEALTH SERVICES

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochydore—NPA) (10.22 a.m.): This Labor Government has lied to the people about its secret plans to privatise Queensland's public hospitals and flog off State-owned nursing homes. Every day we have had a different excuse as to why a secret slash-and-burn report on health has been signed off on by Premier Beattie, Health Minister Edmond and former Treasurer Hamill and taken to Cabinet as a Cabinet submission.

At the start of the week, the Government's excuse was that the report's recommendations had only been noted. Then the story was that they had all been rejected. The next day we were told that some things had been accepted. Today, the truth comes out. Cabinet did not reject those recommendations for privatisation presented to it under the Premier's signature.

How, then, does the Premier explain misleading Parliament on Tuesday when he said—

"Cabinet rejected any concept of privatisation options"?

This is like the net bet affair all over again. Every day the Government changes its story when it is caught out. If that is not a sign of guilt, I do not know what is.

In today's Courier-Mail a spokesman for the Premier admitted that these privatisation recommendations had not been rejected but had been sent off, instead, to a working group. The article continues—

"Less than half of the proposals fell into the 'noted' category and all of those have been referred now to the implementation committee without being rejected by Cabinet...Mr Beattie's spokesman said that the privatisation proposals were still 'on foot'."

That seems a pretty strange way to reject something.

Let me remind honourable members that earlier in the week Minister Edmond's story was that the privatisation of State-owned nursing homes was "up for discussion". That is hardly a ringing rejection, either. It seems that the Health Minister and the Premier had trouble coordinating their excuses.

This is not an open and accountable Government. This Government stands condemned for lying about its secret plans, which include the outsourcing of hospital services, the slashing of services and the winding back of capital works to reduce bed capacity.
