



Speech by

Miss FIONA SIMPSON

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

Hansard 10 November 1999

SURGERY WAITING LISTS

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochydore—NPA) (10.20 a.m.): In the International Year of Older Persons, hundreds of elderly Queenslanders who are blind or in pain are unlikely to receive the surgery that they need under the Beattie Government. Currently, officially more than 38,000 people in this State are waiting for surgery, but the real figure is far higher because of the fudged job that is being done by the Minister for stealth, the Minister for ward closures, Wendy Edmond.

The figures published in the Health Minister's elective surgery waiting list report do not reflect the thousands of extra people in the community who are awaiting surgery. While this Health Minister has talked about accountability, she has hidden documents that I have sought on the surgery figures by taking them to Cabinet after I have lodged freedom of information requests. As one example, I refer to the latest elective surgery figures—

Mrs EDMOND: Mr Speaker, I draw your attention to the fact that the figures are published on the Internet and are readily available to every member of the public. I ask the member to withdraw that statement. It is totally inaccurate.

Miss SIMPSON: It is not untrue. It is not false. It is a true—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Did the Minister find the statement offensive?

Mrs EDMOND: I ask for that to be withdrawn. The figures are not hidden. They are published on the Internet.

Miss SIMPSON: If she is offended, I withdraw it, but it is not untrue. It is completely true.

Mrs EDMOND: Mr Speaker—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Did the Minister find it offensive?

Mrs EDMOND: It is untrue, it is offensive and I ask for it to be withdrawn.

Miss SIMPSON: If she finds it offensive I withdraw, but it is not untrue. As one example, I refer to the latest elective surgery figures—

Mrs EDMOND: Mr Speaker, I seek your indulgence. She has not withdrawn. She has repeated the allegation. It is untrue, it is defamatory and I find it offensive. I ask for it to be withdrawn. The figures are published on the Internet for everybody to see.

Miss SIMPSON: I withdraw again. However, I refer to the latest elective surgery figures which show only a modest number of people waiting for eye surgery at Nambour Hospital. However, in a different lot of figures distributed by the hospital to GPs, which I table, there is a wait of up to 58 weeks for appointments to even see an eye specialist. These people are not even on the surgery list yet. According to these figures, once they have seen a specialist they can wait for up to 82 weeks for surgery.

Time expired.
