



Speech by
Mr TERRY SULLIVAN
MEMBER FOR CHERMSIDE

Hansard 26 August 1999

PRINCE CHARLES HOSPITAL MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE

Mr SULLIVAN (ChermSIDE—ALP) (10.28 a.m.): In this House on Tuesday evening the member for Maroochydore claimed that six patients at the Prince Charles Hospital overdosed because their services were removed. In this House on 19 August—last week—the member for Maroochydore said—

"Six people overdosed because the Minister cut the service."

The queen of furrphies opposite was talking about an alleged cut to mental health services at the Prince Charles Hospital.

Let us tell the facts. Fact one: there has been no reduction in community mental health services in the Prince Charles Hospital district. Fact two: yes, there have been changes—for the better. In July 1999—just over a month ago—two new integrated teams, each comprising 11 or 12 members, were introduced to the Prince Charles Hospital Mental Health Service, making a total of four teams. There is now a multidisciplinary team located in each geographic zone, making services more accessible closer to where people live.

Under the new arrangements, if a person lives in a particular suburb and is being cared for by the local mental health team and needs to go to hospital, that person can be looked after by the same team of professionals. For the shadow Minister's benefit, that is called continuity of care. It is very important to patients—particularly patients who are suffering with mental health problems. Talking of care—or the lack of it, as the member for Maroochydore alleges—there is absolutely no evidence that there has been any increase in overdose behaviour amongst in-patients served by the Prince Charles Hospital Mental Health Service.

Fact three: for the three-month period covering June, July and August 1998, 26 overdose patients presented to the Prince Charles Hospital Mental Health Service. For the same period this year, 12 overdose patients presented to the service. This represents a substantial decrease.

I believe that the member for Maroochydore owes the hardworking staff of the Prince Charles mental health team a very humble apology. She should be thoroughly ashamed of using people with a mental illness as political fodder in such a deceitful and callous manner.
