



Speech by  
**Mr TERRY SULLIVAN**  
MEMBER FOR CHERMSIDE

Hansard 26 August 1999

**HEALTH SERVICE**

**Mr SULLIVAN** (ChermSIDE—ALP) (6.40 p.m.): I want to go straight to the heart of the matter here tonight, because it clearly highlights the difference between this Labor Government and that National/Liberal/One Nation Opposition. This debate is about political scaremongering at its lowest and most unethical level. We have just seen an example of that from the previous Health Minister.

The shadow Minister and her cronies want to have a pot shot at us, but their grubby little point scoring is hitting some of the most vulnerable people in our community, and the shadow Minister knows it: older people living in Government-run aged care facilities, as well as their families and carers.

The Premier could not have made the point more clearly than he has this week. He has said many times—and I will repeat it for those opposite who do not wish to hear—

"The Queensland public health system is not for sale."

This Labor Government is improving health services, and is specifically improving services for older people. We are not the party of privatisation. Anyone who doubts what I say should go to their local library and pick up a copy of the report of the Queensland Commission of Audit of 30 June 1996, more commonly known as the Fitzgerald report. Under the section on page 177, "What Business Activities Should Government Sell", there are a couple of lists. Under health it says: in-patient care, ambulatory care, hotel services, catering, cleaning and laundry, microbiology/pathology services and pharmacy services. There it is in black and white—the hit list of the previous National/Liberal coalition Government. Who authorised the audit? Let us have a look at the front cover. We find that it was the Honourable Joan Sheldon, when the Honourable Rob Borbidge was Premier and the Honourable Mike Horan was Health Minister.

Our present Health Minister, the Opposition spokesperson at the time, said—

"If you do that, there is not a lot of the hospital left."

It takes a lot of hide, and certainly loads of blatant hypocrisy, for the National Party shadow Minister to now come into the House and pretend to be a defender of the public health system, when it was her own frontbench members who ordered this hit list to be drawn up. We know the coalition agenda. It wants to flog off the hospital system to the highest bidder—just like its mate Jeff Kennett is doing in Victoria and just like its Federal coalition members want to do in Canberra.

The words of the Opposition speakers are just shallow words. It is actions that really count, and this Labor Government's actions speak volumes about our genuine commitment to older Queenslanders. We are not privatising aged care services provided by Queensland Health. The Prince Charles Health District, centred on my electorate, is an excellent example of the Government investing in our aged care facilities.

In September last year, I was pleased to welcome the Health Minister to the opening of the new extended care facility to replace the outdated and dilapidated facilities known as Jacaranda Village. The new, modern facility provides 80 beds which are designed for slow-stream rehabilitation, complex care and psychogeriatric care. One thing that the shadow Health Minister said is true. We have closed some of those facilities. Why? They were old and dilapidated. We built a modern 80-bed facility to replace them. Under the stewardship of members opposite the cockroaches were rampant in Jacaranda Village. Those facilities should have been replaced 30 years ago.

That is an \$8m investment—and a very worthy investment—for the care of our older people. The complex was built on time and within budget. Within the same health district, the Eventide Home at Sandgate provides long-term residential nursing home care. Just this year, a contract worth \$2.9m was awarded to upgrade the facility to enable the home to meet accreditation standards. I know that the member for Sandgate, Labor's Gordon Nuttall, was a strong advocate for the residents of Eventide. The redevelopment is well under way and should be completed by the end of November.

We want our nursing homes to deliver the high standard expected of modern aged care, and we will continue to work with local community groups to plan for the future operation of sites such as Eventide. Is this the activity of a Government that is intending a fire sale? No, it is not! Is this the action of a Government that is planning to sell off facilities to the private sector? No, it is not! And all Opposition members know that. The picture is absolutely clear: our public health system is not for sale. In fact, what I have just outlined is just a part of our investment in aged care. Since February, we have allocated a total of \$19m in a Statewide program to upgrade the fire safety and building standards of all State Government-run aged care facilities.

The shadow Minister was right in another sense, too. We have closed some psychiatric wards. Why? Because the old Winston Noble Unit was totally inadequate. There is now a new psychiatric unit at that hospital. We have closed wards at the Prince Charles Hospital—3A and 3B. Why? They have just been moved into a \$117m acute care wing—a state-of-the-art facility. That is why we closed those old facilities.

Time expired.

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