



Speech by

**KEN TURNER**

**MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA**

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Hansard 18 October 2000

**KIRWAN WOMEN'S HOSPITAL**

**Mr TURNER** (Thuringowa—IND) (10.25 a.m.): The Kirwan Women's Hospital has again exceeded its budget this financial year by \$1m. Cuts have been made to essential services such as closing the midwives clinic and closing an outreach clinic that provided professional treatment for isolated women. The obstetric unit has been reduced to 25 beds despite a gradual increase in deliveries and an increase in the referral of high-risk women and babies from rural and remote areas. Day surgery will now be the only option for many women with gynaecological problems requiring surgical intervention. Surgery patients will return from theatre to an armchair. A 70-year-old gynaecology patient could be placed in a bed beside a woman with a new-born baby. This will place the baby at risk of contracting infection, whilst placing a very sick surgical patient next to an unsettled, crying baby.

It is planned that the ward charge sister will surrender her present office and move to what is currently a cupboard for rental TVs. Nursing staff numbers are critically short because of funding cuts. Why, with cuts in nursing staff, fewer beds for patients and appalling service to the public, is the annual budget still being exceeded by in excess of \$1m? Staff have told me that, while the nursing staff has come in under budget for the past two years, the medical staff has been well over budget. They have not been able to cut spending and have, in fact, poached funds from nursing to finance the construction of new medical offices and the rebuilding of overnight accommodation for medical staff on call, despite there being other areas—not as flash—where they can rest.

For the past 10 months, the Kirwan Women's Hospital has employed a locum specialist at a cost of \$24,000 per month. This figure is equivalent to half the yearly wage of a midwife. The overspending by the medical people and the severe cutbacks to the nursing section have created a situation bent on disaster.

In a letter to my office, midwives and nursing staff at Kirwan Women's Hospital suggest—

"Wendy Edmond says that Queensland has a very healthy health service, perhaps she needs to come out of fairyland and remove her blinkers."

I urge the Minister to consult with the midwives at Kirwan Women's Hospital and to listen to what they are saying.

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