



Speech by

Miss FIONA SIMPSON

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

Hansard 5 April 2001

GYMPIE HOSPITAL

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochydore—NPA) (10.16 a.m.): While the Health Minister arrogantly continues to insult and attack the medical fraternity, saying that all the problems are one sided and ignoring the lack of funding for specialist positions and training in the public system, the community of Gympie just wants her to do her job and fix the problem, with two well-regarded surgeons having resigned from the hospital, other staff on stress leave due to work and management issues, and staff morale diving. The community and staff are worried about the impact that has had upon the health services in this very important region. I have asked the minister to inquire into these problems, but I also implore her to go to Gympie and talk with medical, nursing and ancillary staff to resolve these issues.

I table a letter of junior medical staff which outlines their concerns about the unsafe working hours for senior medical staff. Currently, one senior medical officer, who works in a full-time capacity and who is well known for his care, dedication and hard work, works three out of four weekends, is on call seven days a week and provides senior medical cover, obstetric cover and anaesthetics on call. Other issues that have reached boiling point include the fact that public elective endoscopy and colonoscopy services were stopped by the hospital administration because they did not have the funds, not because they did not have the surgeons. That has led to the resignation of at least one of those surgeons. JCCA accredited non-specialist anaesthetists can no longer perform anaesthetics on elective patients but can be called on to do the more complicated emergency anaesthetics despite being denied access to this work on a regular basis.

There are people who are wanting to work in this hospital who have been denied access to working in this hospital—people who are qualified. The lack of funding and the poor management issues requires the minister to intervene, to be involved, not to insult the staff who have been calling out for help since last year, who wrote to the minister last year and who have written again this year. This is a serious problem that Gympie wants to see addressed. It is affecting the quality of services, and staff morale is at such a low level.

Time expired.
