



Speech by

Miss FIONA SIMPSON

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

Hansard 2 August 2001

FIRE LEVY; MAROOCHY RIVER

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochydore—NPA) (5.12 p.m.): There has been more than a doubling in the fire levy in parts of the Sunshine Coast. This has happened without forewarning to communities that were previously under a different category. While we are grateful to have a beautiful new fire station co-located on the Sunshine Motorway with the ambulance station, since that facility has been built there has been a reclassification of some communities. That has resulted in an increase in fees not from the \$88 to \$112 as was foreshadowed in some areas, but, in fact, from \$55 to \$117.80, which is more than a doubling in fees.

I call on the state government to review the boundaries and how these levies have been applied. I call on the government to have some sympathy for people who have faced a doubling in costs, contrary to all previous advice. I also call for a moratorium on the increases to work out a fairer system.

I am angry about the size of the increases and so are those communities. I have written to the minister advising of the growing number of complaints, the fact that there are problems with the way that the boundaries have been applied and the fact that the size of the increases is really very unfair. I ask for his intervention in this matter.

I place on record that the Maroochy Shire Council has let tenders for work on the mouth of the Maroochy River. I did not support calls by some in the community for rock walling of the Maroochy River because training such rivers has a negative environmental impact. We know that when the Noosa River was trained, the rock wall resulted in freehold land—I had heard one figure of 40 blocks of freehold land - falling into the sea. The message from the training of the Noosa River was that we have to be very careful with river mouths. That is why I could not support a call for rock groyning of the Maroochy River.

However, the option that has been approved is the use of geotextile groynes and some dredging of the northern channel, which will have a far lesser impact than what some had called for. I am pleased to see that action getting under way. I know there were some delays with weather and seasonal changes. Now that the work is under way, we are hoping that it will stabilise the area, although obviously it is a very difficult issue when nature is involved.
