



Speech by

## Miss FIONA SIMPSON

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

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Hansard 28 November 2001

### IRRADIATION PLANT

**Miss SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—NPA) (10.18 a.m.): An irradiation plant proposed for the Narangba industrial estate by Steritech is causing a great deal of public concern. I seek leave to table a non-conforming petition of about 900 signatories on behalf of residents opposed to the proposed Narangba irradiation plant.

Leave granted.

**Miss SIMPSON:** I share many of the concerns of residents, particularly the concern about the total inadequacy of Queensland Health to act in the public interest to ensure that such a plant would be appropriately monitored and enforcement standards met. Queensland Health, as the licensing body under the Radiation Safety Act 1999, has poor form in regard to meeting its own targets for the monitoring of storage and usage of radioactive material in this state. Under this minister, the department has even changed and cut performance measurements from future budget papers for spurious reasons. I believe the real reason is the failure of the government to resource this unit and the fact that so many staff were on line drafting the regulations for the new act, and thus the ongoing problems of meeting acceptable standards of monitoring.

When the new act passed through parliament, I asked the minister about the adequacy of resourcing for the radiation/environmental health unit, and the minister said that things were fine. But we find out that the statistics show quite a different story. In 1999-2000, a new performance measure was introduced with a changed audit. At that stage, the actual number of audits of licensed sites handling radioactive materials in the state was 820 under the old standard. In 2000-01, the target was 700, but the actual reached by the department was 650. This is a significant drop in the number of audits performed by the department.

Also of great worry are the number of radiation officers approved. The actual target for 1999-2000 was 180. The target for the following year was 500, but the actual was only 236. There is no target for this financial year, and the budget footnotes say the measure will no longer be reported upon.

Time expired.

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