



Speech by

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM

MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE

Hansard 17 October 2001

GLADSTONE HOSPITAL

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (10.23 a.m.): Concerns regarding the public health system in Queensland continue to grow. Constituents in my electorate are concerned at the reduction in services available at the Gladstone Hospital. Incidents like the closing of outpatients for a short time do nothing to encourage confidence.

I wish to reaffirm the hard work done by Ian Mottarely, Paul de Jong and other SMOs, Ken Denny, Ian Nugent and medical staff—indeed, all staff—at the Gladstone Hospital. Are they perfect? No. However, so many at the hospital go that extra mile to provide as good a service as they can within the constraints placed on them by their budgets.

Health councils were appointed to give a broader view to hospital management. Many times the councils feel disempowered by a lack of information made available to them. I say let them fulfil their role.

In a growing centre like Gladstone we need growth in services, not a diminution; an extended intensive care service, not a reduction to a high dependency unit; and local access to specialists, either permanently on-site or visiting, to reduce the need for large numbers of patients to travel. Management must work cooperatively with staff. Restructuring a position out of existence while that officer is on leave does nothing for staff morale.

Regional health is under pressure. Some health practitioners appear reticent to go outside the south-east corner. Yet health services are basic to the peace of mind of members of any community. I look forward to working further with the government and the Minister for Health to improve the health services in the Gladstone region.
