



Speech by

ANDREW McNAMARA

MEMBER FOR HERVEY BAY

Hansard 7 March 2002

HEALTH SERVICES, HERVEY BAY

Mr McNAMARA (Hervey Bay—ALP) (10.51 p.m.): I rise to inform the House of further improvements to the already outstanding medical services available to residents of Hervey Bay and the Fraser Coast. As honourable members would be aware, people living on the Fraser Coast are in the privileged position of having two level 4 base hospitals operating within 25 minutes drive of each other. I had the opportunity to inspect the Maryborough Base Hospital recently when the Health Minister, the Hon. Wendy Edmond, officially opened the \$18 million upgrade of that hospital, and it is magnificent.

I am also extremely proud of the Hervey Bay Hospital, which was worked for so persistently by the former member for Hervey Bay, Bill Nunn. It is an outstanding medical facility, and I pay tribute to the director of nursing, Merrin Pease, and her staff, as well as all of the other ward, security, cleaning and medical staff who do such an outstanding job in providing care for the people of Hervey Bay and surrounding districts.

I am particularly pleased to inform the House that on 24 January 2002 the then acting Health Minister, Robert Schwarten, announced the appointment of four new doctors for the Fraser Coast health district. These new doctors have been appointed under Queensland Health's rural scholarship scheme. This scheme is designed to attract health professionals to work and experience life in rural and regional areas of the state. The rural scholarship scheme gives financial support to scholarship holders to complete their tertiary studies full time in return for their working in rural communities when they graduate.

This year the Beattie government is spending \$3 million helping more than 300 students of dentistry, medicine, nursing, pharmacy, physiotherapy, podiatry, psychology, occupational therapy, radiography, social work and speech pathology to finish their studies. The appointment of these four new doctors in the Fraser Coast health district demonstrates precisely how the government's rural scholarship scheme is working to improve health care for Queenslanders across the state.

The commitment of the Health Minister to improving access to health services for regional Queenslanders deserves commendation. When the minister was in Hervey Bay she took the opportunity to accompany me to visit the Wide Bay Women's Health Centre and inspected the Bayhaven Nursing Home. At Bayhaven the minister met the recipient of the minister's volunteer medal, Mrs Ann Peters. Mrs Peters has been providing voluntary assistance daily to the residents of Bayhaven Nursing Home for the last five years. She is an inspiration, and I was delighted that the minister was able to recognise Mrs Peters' contribution and to meet her personally in Hervey Bay.

As I mentioned, the minister also visited the Wide Bay Women's Health Centre in Hervey Bay, taking the time to speak directly with the centre's president, Greta Brennan, her committee and the centre's staff. The close attention being given to Hervey Bay's needs in the areas of hospital and community health care is very welcome and explains the dramatic improvement of health services over recent years in my city.
