



Speech by

ANDREW McNAMARA

MEMBER FOR HERVEY BAY

Hansard 24 October 2002

Mr M. Caltabiano

Mr McNAMARA (Hervey Bay—ALP) (4.25 p.m.): Like most members of this House and indeed in common with the overwhelming majority of Queenslanders, I have taken the view that the Queensland Liberal Party is mostly harmless and best ignored until it grows up. Regretfully, however, I cannot ignore the disgraceful slur on my city of Hervey Bay made by the state President of the Queensland Liberal Party, Michael Caltabiano, last week in, of all places, Cairns. I quote from the Media Monitors transcript of a live radio interview Mr Caltabiano gave on Monday this week in which he said—

Hervey Bay has grown from 25,000 to 40,000 people in five years.

Wrong, it is 46,000. It continues—

And they have a very small hospital there. The big hospital is in Maryborough which has got 25,000 people.

While these statements say much about the lack of knowledge which the Liberal Party has about regional Queensland in general and Maryborough and Hervey Bay in particular, the misrepresentation of Hervey Bay's health services cannot be allowed to stand uncorrected. It would appear that Mr Caltabiano and the Liberal Party have missed the fact that Hervey Bay has a shiny new \$42 million, 104 bed hospital, opened in 1997. The Leader of the Opposition would know this because he was the Health Minister who opened it. Are you sure you want to be in coalition with these duds, Mike? The member for Caloundra could also have helped out Mr Caltabiano, because she was the Treasurer when the hospital was under construction. Of course, both being members of the Liberal Party probably means that she and Mr Caltabiano only speak through their lawyers. But in any event, Mr Caltabiano was in Hervey Bay only a couple of weeks ago. I guess the topic of conversation at the Hervey Bay Liberal branch meeting remained, as ever, wine appreciation and did not stray on to something as mundane as public health care. It is fortunate that the wandering Mr Caltabiano's Brisbane City Council constituents are well covered at state level by their local members Terry Mackenroth and Phil Reeves if this indicative of Mr Caltabiano's grasp of facts. Mr Caltabiano has been talking Hervey Bay down and he should publicly retract his comments and apologise to the people of Hervey Bay. Health care is one of the bay's strong points, and the Liberal Party should butt out if it cannot tell the truth.

Time expired.