



Speech by

## Miss FIONA SIMPSON

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

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Hansard 22 August 2002

### AMPUTEE CLINIC, GOLD COAST

**Miss SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—NPA) (10.25 a.m.): I support the Gold Coast Amputees Advisory Association in its call for the Health Minister to establish a locally based once-a-week amputee clinic at the Gold Coast Hospital. The current once-a-month visiting clinic with a doctor from Brisbane—the doctor sees patients between 9.30 and 11.30 and the therapist sees patients between 9.30 a.m. and 1 p.m.—fails to meet the huge backlog.

Losing a limb to disease or trauma such as a road accident is horrific enough. However, the first year after this loss involves a stressful process of repeated trips to specialists and ancillary health professionals for treatment and adjustment of artificial limbs. Currently on the Gold Coast there are an estimated 442 amputees, 384 of whom are listed on the Queensland Artificial Limb Scheme's register. To receive locally based public services through the visiting monthly public clinic, people have to wait three to four months. Alternatively they can drive or be driven by ambulance or family to Brisbane.

The Amputees Advisory Association on the Gold Coast estimates that there are 133 new leg prescriptions each year and myriad other appointments which go with each person, making a conservative estimate of 371 appointments per year. The skills base exists on the Gold Coast to have a locally based clinic. The association advises me that its meetings with hospital staff show that there are appropriately certified doctors and physios qualified to undertake this work, as well as local prosthetists.

The association says that it is hard enough adjusting to being an amputee, but the process of adjusting to artificial limbs can take 12 months. The stump has to shrink to its final size and there is much ongoing adjustment, pain and perseverance. This means that many people, with the additional trauma of having to wait months for a local appointment or being driven back and forth to Brisbane, just give up and accept life in a wheelchair or on crutches. They deserve a better go—

Time expired.