



Speech by

Miss FIONA SIMPSON

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

Hansard 7 November 2002

SUNSHINE COAST STATISTICAL DIVISION

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochydore—NPA) (12.08 a.m.): It is long overdue for the Sunshine Coast and the Gold Coast to be recognised with their own statistical divisions. If the Sunshine Coast is to be in a stronger position to lobby for regional development and government infrastructure, it needs to be separated from the Gold Coast statistical division. These two major regions, the Sunshine Coast and the Gold Coast, are included in the same statistical division that curiously rings Brisbane to the west in a half doughnut reaching out to the edge of the Darling Downs.

The Sunshine Coast and the Gold Coast are separated by more than one million people in Brisbane and greater Brisbane. They are distinctly different regions with different needs. It is just crazy that they are lumped together in a way which I believe is disadvantaging their regional economies. When governments and private business allocate resources and assess economic development and demographics, official government statistics are used as the basis for many vitally important decisions. It is true that the Australian Bureau of Statistics can drill down these statistics to the various regions, but usually it comes at a greater cost and at an inconvenience when it is outside the standard format.

Also, when the state government produces its annual budget paper it provides a breakdown of spending in the statistical divisions rather than the regions. But these divisional figures are as informative as mud, because statistical divisions such as Moreton have no community of interest. I have written to the federal government and have called for this change. I also urge the state government to change the way it presents its reports to reflect spending in the regions rather than this being based upon this archaic Moreton statistical division where areas like the Sunshine Coast, the Gold Coast and Beaudesert are lumped together. Planning of infrastructure and the implementation and construction of that infrastructure depends upon good information and good statistics. Unfortunately, as we know, in high growth areas the delivery of a lot of that infrastructure lags behind. The last thing we want is for the statistics and the way that they are formulated and presented in these archaic statistical decisions in fact to hinder that process.

When we apply for information from the ABS, there are usually standard formats based upon the statistical divisions without the more easily accessible breakdown for the regions. That is why I am bringing this matter before the state parliament. I certainly seek the state government's support in efforts to lobby the federal government in that regard. I also ask that the state government apply the same standard to its reports.