



Speech by

## Miss FIONA SIMPSON

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

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Hansard 8 November 2002

### PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE

**Miss SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—NPA) (4.36 p.m.): I rise to speak in regard to the public liability issues that are still a serious matter within the community. I ask: when is the state government going to take up its responsibilities in regard to serious tort law reform in this area? The changes that are needed, both at a federal and state level, require a commitment to be driven to have an outcome that will ensure that communities still hold events and still have associations that are able to volunteer and do good things for the community.

We know that there needs to be proper prudential regulation at the federal level, but at the state level the task of tort law reform is substantial. The first raft of changes in legislation brought before the House a few months ago did not go far enough. I again call on the state government to address the serious issue of tort law reform, particularly in regard to negligence law.

In my own community, just in the past few weeks I know of several events that have been cancelled or aborted due to the fact that people were unable to obtain a proper public liability policy that was reasonably priced. It is a shame when we start to hear about carols by candlelight evenings that had been held in council parks for years having to be cancelled because of an inability to obtain a reasonably priced insurance policy.

As a member of parliament I am fortunate that I have insurance through Parliament House, as do other members of parliament, in regard to undertaking our official duties. That was fortunate, because recently I had to meet with a number of canegrowers, but in that case I had to do it upon Crown land because council land required insurance that my parliamentary policy would not have covered. But even through doing our own duties we start to realise that it is getting increasingly complicated. As a member of parliament, we may be asked to sign a waiver in regard to council property in the course of undertaking work. Even our own policies as members of parliament do not cover us for that work. We have to consider carefully where we undertake our work.

That is only just the tip of the iceberg. The wider community is increasingly finding that they are being told that no, they cannot hold community events which one would reasonably expect not to be risky activities. The issue still has not been adequately addressed. We still have not seen changes in this parliament to address the core issues of the negligence laws that do need a reasonable overhaul—a reasonable and a balanced approach—because to date we still have not seen the balance to address that. One of my colleagues previously addressed some specifics in his own electorate. I still see constituents facing a doubling in premiums. Particular events are increasingly difficult to hold. It is a shame when carols by candlelight events are cancelled.

Time expired.