



Speech by

**Miss FIONA SIMPSON**

**MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE**

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Hansard 14 May 2002

#### **HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

**Miss SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—NPA) (10.28 a.m.): Public hospitals under this minister are experiencing up to 100 per cent bed occupancy, blow-outs in wait times in accident and emergency and, increasingly, cancelled surgery lists. And it is not even winter, the traditional time of influx of medical cases into hospitals. Today's article in the *Courier-Mail* rightly identifies the disastrous management of the public health system in Queensland under Health Minister Wendy Edmond. However, I refer members to my statement of reservations from last year's Health estimates committee hearings, in which I listed these issues in great detail. I referred to the blow-out of the departmental debt to half a billion dollars, the increasingly greedy clawback of funds to Treasury from the Health budget, the failure of the Beattie government to increase Health spending and, most importantly, the lack of real net increases in staffing in hospitals.

As I noted then, the projected net increase of 32 extra full-time equivalent staff across the acute sector in some 188 public hospitals was totally inadequate when listed in last year's budget papers. That failure and the 2001-02 Beattie budget is now coming home to roost, as we see staff struggling and surgery being cancelled. As members of parliament the public come to us and increasingly tell us that their surgery has been cancelled and doctors and nurses tell us of the appalling conditions. This Beattie government has more than doubled the number of staff in the Premier's Department, but when it comes to our doctors and nurses—the people who deliver real health services, real care—they only get a budgeted increase of an extra 32 full-time equivalent staff in the acute hospital system. That is in the budget papers. We pointed out this fact last year. Unfortunately, we are seeing this coming home to roost with the terrible conditions that people are trying to work under. This government has its priorities wrong when it comes to where it is spending the dollars. It only increased the health budget in real terms by—

Time expired.