



Speech by

Miss FIONA SIMPSON

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

Hansard 5 September 2002

HEALTH FUNDING

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochydore—NPA) (7.20 p.m.): The Health Minister, Wendy Edmond, has ignored the cries of another widow whose late husband was let down by an overstressed public health system under the minister's management. Louis Van Loon had cancer and was forced to spend his final months in intense pain because of staff shortages at Redcliffe Hospital. His wife, Kate, has written to Mrs Edmond in disgust, only to get a pro-forma letter which fails to provide any real sympathy or explanation as to why her late husband was not provided the necessary care and attention during his dying days. Four times he went to Redcliffe Hospital with the hope of being treated, four times he was sent home with more tablets, according to his wife, and meanwhile was forced to endure constant pain because his blood pressure tablets were overriding his pain-killers. He was told the specialist he had to see was on holidays. This was unacceptable. There should have been another specialist. At least he should have been referred to another hospital for treatment. He died on 29 May 2002.

There is a growing list of similar stories of people having difficulty being admitted to hospital or being discharged too early. There are other examples also from Redcliffe Hospital, where bed shortages have seen our sick, elderly people sent home. In one case, according to details provided by Aged Care Queensland, an elderly person was shifted from Redcliffe Hospital to the local aged care facility. Upon arrival, that resident, in fact, was semicomatose and unable to communicate. This is inappropriate. This is an example of the stress the hospital system is under. But the people who are suffering are often elderly and are finding that they are put into situations with inadequate care.

The government can find \$64 million for its giant corporate friends but will not release the list of who they are. The government can find \$280 million for Lang Park and \$29 million for a foot bridge, yet we have examples of the elderly who have been discharged too early. This is a serious issue.

Honourable members interjected.

Miss SIMPSON: Obviously it is not serious to the members interjecting from behind me. But the Health Minister does not recognise this fact. We have this information from hostels and aged care facilities who have had this problem of residents being discharged too early.

An honourable member: They should go and say some prayers.

Miss SIMPSON: I think we want the Health Minister and the government to get their priorities right, to put money into the area and to help the staff help the patients get the treatment they need. I am disgusted that members opposite have no compassion for the sick and elderly who have found themselves in the situation of being discharged too early and those who have been dying—

Time expired.