



Speech by

**Miss FIONA SIMPSON**

**MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE**

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Hansard 6 November 2002

### **MEDICAL INDEMNITY INSURANCE**

**Miss SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—NPA) (10.26 a.m.): If Health Minister Wendy Edmond moved any slower when faced with a health crisis, rigor mortis would set in. Finally she has acknowledged that there is a problem with the level of cover the government has been providing for doctors working in the public health system. Finally the government is realising that it has to acknowledge this and provide a better level of cover. We have been calling for this for months in this parliament. The doctors have been calling for this for months. I also raised the inadequacy of public indemnity cover for doctors in the public system during the estimates process.

The visiting medical officer agreement expired nearly six months ago. During that time we have seen a situation whereby doctors who are genuinely despairing about the level of cover from Queensland Health have been withdrawing their services from the system. They knew that the word of the Health Minister, as opposed to a legally binding document, was not adequate cover. During that time we have seen scores of obstetricians, ENT specialists and orthopaedic surgeons in a range of specialties withdraw or resign from Queensland Health while this Health Minister has done nothing. In fact, she stood up in this place and denied that there was a problem.

We acknowledge that today the Health Minister has finally said that the government is going to do something about it. She is belligerent, but I appeal to the Health Minister. Next time she faces a crisis like this, she should not wait for people to withdraw from the health system. She should not wait to see scores of surgeries cancelled, with people desperate for access to the health system, while she says there is no problem. When a health crisis such as the indemnity issue presents itself the minister should take action and stop denying there is a problem. Countless numbers of surgeries have been cancelled while doctors have removed themselves from the health system. The Health Minister has continued to—

Time expired.