



Speech by

**CHRIS CUMMINS**

**MEMBER FOR KAWANA**

Hansard 07 October 2003

### **SUNSHINE COAST HEALTH SERVICES FOUNDATION**

**Mr CUMMINS** (Kawana—ALP) (12.25 p.m.): Cancer is a word that can cause universal fear and in time impacts on all of us in some way. For some it is a personal struggle as they battle virtually invisible enemies inside their bodies. For many, cancer means caring for a friend or loved one who needs love, support and assistance over an extended period as they undertake debilitating chemotherapy and radiation treatment.

The Sunshine Coast Health Services Foundation was established in 1998 under the Hospitals Foundation Act 1982. Its function is to provide support through fundraising for additional equipment, training, support programs and research funding to improve patient comfort at Nambour, Caloundra and Maleny hospitals and the numerous community health sites across the Sunshine Coast.

The Sunshine Coast Health Services Foundation committed to a major fundraising venture to financially assist in the establishment of a contemporary care centre for the Sunshine Coast based at Nambour General Hospital. The aim of this project is to bring all existing services into one convenient and aesthetically pleasing location. In this new centre there is a capacity for future expansion as demand increases.

The \$1.5 million fundraising campaign to establish this centre is the largest community fundraising program ever undertaken on the Sunshine Coast. Community support has been unprecedented, drawing offers from people and businesses right across our region. The campaign has been extremely successful, exceeding the target of \$1.5 million following the auction of the 'House the coast built' on 12 July 2003.

The engagement of the community on the Sunshine Coast has been exceptional and our community needs to be commended as they have been both generous and very supportive. Prestige builder Emerald Homes built the house for free, joined by many of their suppliers and volunteer tradespeople, building product suppliers and media supporters. The result has been a goodwill frenzy, with Sunshine Coast Health Services being the winner.

With every positive, sadly, in our somewhat pessimistic society, we do have a negative. I will briefly note the disappointment experienced by not only the good, hardworking people of the Sunshine Coast Health Services Foundation but also many others across the state concerning the comments of the acting opposition health spokesperson when she claimed—

I think this is a rot that is being perpetuated on the people of the Sunshine Coast, and I think it is absolutely appalling when referring to the community fundraising campaign.

I, like many others in the community, was in utter disbelief as cheap political point scoring should never be condoned when good people are trying to achieve positive results for the community in which we live. I believe that it is extremely sad, unfortunate, unfounded and totally unwarranted to be wrongly criticised by small-minded, insignificant, underachieving critics both in politics and in the press who clearly, purposely or perhaps through sheer ignorance simply misunderstood the issue. I will quote a letter to the editor which simply claimed—

The state opposition spokesperson feels that stirring the pot will win future votes. I do not recall any calls to the foundation office to clarify the facts—

**Miss SIMPSON:** I did not make those claims.

**Mr CUMMINS:** I think if the member reads the *Hansard* it says that the acting opposition health spokesperson—

**Miss SIMPSON:** I will make it clear for the record of *Hansard*: I have never made those claims and I want it clear and correct on the record.

**Mr CUMMINS:** I am quoting from a letter to the editor.

**Miss SIMPSON:** Yes, but I make it clear: I have never made those claims. I have supported it. In fact, I put a donation towards that fundraising and I did not make those claims.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Liddy Clark): Order! There is no point of order.

**Mr CUMMINS:** The letter states further—

I do not recall any calls to the foundation office to clarify the facts before she fired her political guns.

**Miss SIMPSON:** I did not make those claims. I want that on the *Hansard* record. In fact, I put a donation towards that fundraising. That needs to be clear on the parliamentary record.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Liddy Clark): Order! There is no point of order.

**Mr CUMMINS:** With hurtful, negative criticisms that we see too often in Australian society, I must commend, not criticise, these positive people after having a knife thrust into their hearts during the final days of this marvellous campaign. Just prior to the big auction, they continued in the most positive of ways and did not allow themselves to be dragged into the gutter. They powered on showing true Australian spirit, ensuring that the fundraising effort not only achieved the goals but exceeded the amount they set.

**Miss SIMPSON:** I rise to a point of order. I want the record corrected. The member's claims are offensive and untrue. I ask that they be withdrawn. I make it quite clear: I did not make those claims. That needs to be on the *Hansard*. The member is misleading the parliament.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Liddy Clark): Order! There is no point of order.

**Mr CUMMINS:** As I said clearly, I quoted from a letter to the editor. What is planned for the centre is a very important range of cancer support services. People such as Lisa Rowe, Mike Kelly and everyone else who has been involved in the Sunshine Coast Health Services Foundation should hold up their heads very high. Very well done! As for the small-minded, negative critics, many who have not had even the courage—

Time expired.