



Speech by

**ELISA ROBERTS**

**MEMBER FOR GYMPIE**

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Hansard 30 October 2003

#### **PUBLIC HOSPITALS**

**Miss ELISA ROBERTS** (Gympie—Ind) (6.46 p.m.): Whilst I was pleased to hear the Premier's ministerial statement regarding the reduction in waiting times for urgent and semi-urgent operations in Queensland public hospitals, I am disheartened to have to provide an example which is in direct contrast to the statements made by the Premier.

One of my constituents was due to see an eye specialist in the eye department of the Specialist Outpatient Services Clinic at the Royal Brisbane Hospital in November 2002. On 23 October of that year this constituent received a letter stating his appointment had been cancelled until November 2003. Though concerned about the sight deterioration which would occur whilst waiting a further 12 months for treatment, the man accepted the inevitable. However, in October this year the man received a letter cancelling his appointment to another date in November 2004. He was also advised that he would also be seeing a different specialist—once again, 12 months away.

In response, the man had to once again cancel travel and accommodation arrangements. The constituent in question is almost blind in his right eye and in all likelihood will be completely blind by the time his appointment comes around in 2004. That is, of course, only if his appointment is not cancelled once again. My constituent is wondering where the line will be drawn. If he is completely blind by the time his appointment finally takes place, he feels it was pointless bothering with trying to get help in the first place.

Whilst there may be a reduction in the length of waiting time for surgery for some, there are still some people out there whose health and life needs have been disregarded. To me, the result of total blindness is something for which all those responsible should be deeply ashamed.

I cannot imagine anyone in this House maintaining that a two-year appointment to have the onset of blindness reversed could be reasonable. I believe that we, as elected representatives, need to put ourselves in the shoes of some of those whom we represent in order to appreciate the frustrations that they experience as a result of the systems which governments put into place. My constituent's concern is not simply a frivolous complaint but an event which could very well be life-altering in a way that should never happen in a first-world country such as ours.