



Speech by

Miss FIONA SIMPSON

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

Hansard 3 April 2003

BAYHAVEN NURSING HOME

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochydore—NPA) (7.07 p.m.): The Health Minister has quoted the *Fraser Coast Chronicle's* recent highly personal attack against me regarding my criticism of the government's sanctioned inquiries into closing the state nursing home, Bayhaven. Unfortunately, this newspaper will not print my letter to the editor in reply, which is disappointing as this tends to compromise the paper's perceived independence. However, worst of all, it denies a voice to some of the people who have contacted me about the issue because the member for Hervey Bay does not represent their views. I will not be intimidated by those who have ignored the plight of the elderly who have contacted me about the proposed closure of Bayhaven Nursing Home and the way the supposed consultation has been undertaken.

I now table a petition from 1,200 signatories calling for Bayhaven Nursing Home to be saved and for the state government to fulfil its commitments to the aged in the community and their state government nursing home. The frail elderly are not chess pieces to be moved about without consideration of their opinions. The option I was pushing for was the prospect of a rehabilitation centre being developed without Bayhaven having to be closed. Furthermore, even Queensland Health's own documents show that best practice for effective rehabilitation centres is to co-locate them with acute facilities. Only a few years ago the Beattie Labor government hotly denied it had accepted a recommendation in a leaked cabinet submission to close state nursing beds and to privatise those beds.

In 1999, Premier Beattie and Wendy Edmond also wrote in to Health staff, stating—

Recommendations, such as investigating privatisation of aged care, are beyond the scope of the project's terms of reference, are contrary to government policy and are rejected out of hand.

I refer to an AWU union alert this year, which states—

At 10.35 a.m. on Friday 31/1/03 AWU Organiser Keith Ballin was contacted by Health Minister Wendy Edmond's office saying that at no stage will the state government sell Bayhaven or any other government nursing home.

Yet the Health Minister now states that she has given permission to the district health council to look at the issue of closing the state run Bayhaven nursing home. Just like the Premier's no new taxes promise, it seems that shutting state nursing home beds is another broken promise.

I want to quote from some of the letters that I have received from local people and their families. One woman whose husband had been a patient in Bayhaven wrote—

There must be other means of acquiring a rehabilitation service for the elderly other than selling or closing Bayhaven.

Another lady wrote—

My mother is now a resident of the home having just been admitted. She has become too much of a handful for my 72-year-old father to look after by himself.

My father told me a few weeks ago of a 'plan' he had been made aware of by the staff who work at Bayhaven, to close the facility and farm the residents out to other facilities in Maryborough, some 30 minutes drive from Hervey Bay.

Time expired.