



Speech by

## Miss FIONA SIMPSON

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

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Hansard 26 November 2003

### HOSPITAL WAITING LISTS

**Miss SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—NPA) (12.48 a.m.): The Beattie government's so-called health report penned by the Premier's spin doctor has backfired and sparked community anger. The public do not want spin doctors; they want real doctors. My office always receives considerable numbers of calls from constituents from around the state who need help in accessing the hospital system. Since the health report of the government came out, this has increased. People are angry because they are not getting timely access to the system. In many areas—and certainly on the Sunshine Coast—it has, in fact, got worse.

I was talking to one gentleman who has been told that it will be at least 12 months before he can see a specialist to even be considered for surgery. That is a specialist through the public system for orthopaedic surgery.

For eye surgery, it takes about five years to see a specialist before getting on the waitlist for surgery. That is appalling because we have people in real pain and people in real difficulty, yet this government will not address the waiting list, which involves those who have to wait years just to see a specialist.

I have been receiving a considerable number of calls, particularly increasing in the last few days, from doctors as well as specialists from around the state who are saying that they have had a gutful. They have worked their hearts and souls out and they are walking out of the system because they are hitting their heads against a brick wall. They have not been listened to. That concerns me because these are highly qualified people who have given excellent service, and they are getting out. They are burnt out and they are getting out because they have found that their concerns and their suggestions about how to provide a better service have been ignored.

I will also address the issue of cancer services. This is not only a matter of more money, but it is about better management. Under this government, and this was not reported in the Premier's spin doctor report, cancer services have been degraded to the point where we have seen some of the worst waiting times ever. There is up to a 15 week wait for radiation therapy and a considerable wait for radiation therapy services for people who are not elective surgery patients. They are people with life-threatening conditions.

Once again, I call on the government to open up more opportunities for access to cancer therapy services in the regions. On the Sunshine Coast there is an opportunity to purchase access to services immediately off the private provider. We can provide public access in the same way as occurred when Townsville patients were flown to Nambour to access that service provider because their public system was not coping. I believe that there is an opportunity to give access to people in the regions. I call on this government to do that, because it is about making sure that people have timely access to a lifesaving treatment.

Time expired.