



Speech by

Hon. K. LINGARD

MEMBER FOR BEAUDESERT

Hansard 5 June 2003

BEAUDESERT HOSPITAL

Hon. K. R. LINGARD (Beaudesert—NPA) (12.45 a.m.): The Beaudesert Hospital saga continues. This hospital was provided during the coalition period of 1997-98. It has been treated as a political football ever since. I notice it appeared on the front page of the *Beaudesert Times* yesterday. A report called the 'Logan-Beaudesert Health Services District' compiled on 30 August 2002 states—

The Beaudesert Hospital (40 beds) provides general surgery, internal and emergency medicine, obstetrics and gynaecology, anaesthesia and a range of clinical support programs.

The ALP government has treated this hospital like a white elephant. We had a long battle to keep our hospital in Beaudesert, which in years past saw patients travel from Kyogle, Oxenford, Greenbank and many other outlying areas to receive treatment, such was the regard for its services. Naturally, the community has become very critical.

In January 2002 the community of Beaudesert was told that its negative attitude could 'damage Queensland Health's bid to find a temporary medical superintendent and other senior medical staff'. The regional director of the district health services stated that she was concerned about talk that there were plans afoot to downgrade services provided by Beaudesert Hospital. She went on further to state that Queensland Health was committed to restoring all services at the hospital. A public meeting at the Beaudesert Civic Centre was held in February 2002 and various key players were invited to discuss the crisis. At that time we were told that the regional director had committed to returning full services to the Beaudesert Hospital as soon as possible. What did that mean?

Beaudesert shire has a population of over 55,000, with an annual growth rate of four per cent. Over 400 babies a year used to be born at the old Beaudesert Hospital. At the Beaudesert community meetings a commitment was made to keep the people informed by regular updates of the progress towards the goal to return the hospital services to the standard the locals had grown accustomed to.

In February 2002 another public meeting was held in Beaudesert. A commitment was made by Logan that there would be no downgrading of services. Since that time communication from Mrs Edmond and the regional director has been quite honestly non-existent. The surgical and maternity wards continue to be closed. People attending outpatients are told to see their private doctor. Some accident victims are airlifted to Southport, Logan or Brisbane hospitals. Others are taken by ambulance. The mother of a child with a suspected broken foot was told that she would have to drive her child to Southport because there were no X-ray services at the Beaudesert Hospital on weekends. A child with a temperature but in a stable condition was sent from Beaudesert Hospital to the Mater for treatment because Beaudesert Hospital was not able to perform the necessary tests.

Women who go to Logan to have their babies are supposed to receive postnatal care at Beaudesert Hospital. Recently a lady was waiting to be transferred to Beaudesert Hospital and she became aware that there were no midwives at Beaudesert Hospital. Her option was to go home with a new baby and midwives could call on her from time to time. The new superintendent finally commenced duties at Beaudesert Hospital in January this year. However, the services remain at the basic end of the scale. How long is this going to continue?