



Speech by

## Fiona Simpson

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

Hansard Wednesday, 12 May 2004

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### NAMBOUR HOSPITAL

**Miss SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—NPA) (6.43 p.m.): I rise to support the health services on the Sunshine Coast. In speaking about this issue, I note that when I have raised these matters the Health Minister and his Labor colleagues have taken to personal abuse and have tried to deny the issues which are very real and which are affecting health workers and their patients on the Sunshine Coast.

**An opposition member:** What's new?

**Miss SIMPSON:** That is right. Unfortunately, it is a case of shooting the messenger rather than listening to the message. Nambour Hospital, which is the base hospital on the Sunshine Coast, is one of the busiest trauma hospitals outside of Brisbane. It is not a little country hospital; it is one of the busiest trauma hospitals outside of Brisbane. That means there are a lot of true emergency cases presenting, and it does not have the option to divert to another tertiary level emergency facility. It is the first port of call and if it is resourced appropriately it has the level of skill to deal with those cases.

In the last few years we have seen severe attrition of some of the very specialists we need in order to see those tertiary emergency services continue as well as a great impact on the range of other services at Nambour Hospital and the network of other hospitals on the Sunshine Coast. Currently there are half the number of anaesthetists required to run the Sunshine Coast health district. Most of those anaesthetists are based at Nambour Hospital and provide outreach services to other hospitals.

During the election campaign the government came out and said that it was going to ramp up surgery at Noosa Hospital and Caloundra Hospital to take the pressure off Nambour Hospital and generally deliver better services, but it did not address the very specific issue of how to restore the specialist services that had been lost. The surgery cannot be done unless the anaesthetists are there to provide that very basic level of service that is necessary. The government has not addressed that. Good people have left the public system—from nurses through to specialists—because of the way they have been treated, the way they have been bullied, the way they have not been supported by Queensland Health and this Labor government and the way the indemnity issue was handled on the Sunshine Coast and throughout Queensland. We saw many very good, capable people choose to leave the public system because they did not get support from this government. What was the government's response? Personal abuse of those staff. We saw that with Wendy Edmond and, unfortunately, this Health Minister has continued to do that.

We need to see government support through proper indemnity cover for its staff. We need to see them not shoot the messenger but listen to the staff. It should give them a guarantee that when they speak up about the conditions they will not be attacked but listened to. We do not have a service unless those nurses through to the specialists are delivering it. A lot of the time the issues are not about money; they are about being listened to. The government should listen to what they are saying about a better way of delivering the services so that people do not have to wait five or six years just to get an appointment for basic surgery.