



Speech by

Fiona Simpson

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

Hansard Thursday, 24 November 2005

CORRECTIONAL FACILITY, SUNSHINE COAST

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochydore—NPA) (10.04 pm): I am calling on all Sunshine Coast members of parliament to oppose the Beattie government's proposal for a 4,000-inmate prison potentially to be located on the Sunshine Coast. I know my coalition colleague Mark McArdle agrees with me that this would be disastrous for our area, but I am calling on the Labor MPs to also stand up for the Sunshine Coast. The Sunshine Coast image of an idyllic family destination could be under threat from this huge jail that the Beattie government is talking about. The Premier, when he announced it, said that it would be one hour's drive from Brisbane. The Beattie government has refused to rule out dumping this huge megajail on the Sunshine Coast. When he was on the Sunshine Coast, he again refused to do this.

I want to tell honourable members that a jail of this size is extraordinary, and if they think this is good social policy they are dinosaurs. Four thousand inmates are bad enough but trying to rehabilitate those people is another matter, because the way they will come out will be a lot worse than the way they go in. A jail that size creates a jail culture that does not break the culture of crime; in fact, it nurtures it. We need smaller jails with intensive programs to break the culture of crime, but 4,000-inmate prisons are disastrous. I am amazed that this is the government's answer. The Beattie government's proposal to put such a prison within one hour of Brisbane but within south-east Queensland—

Mr CUMMINS: I rise to a point of order. The member is clearly misleading the House. It is on the record that the state government is writing to the councils and the member is misleading the House.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr English): There is no point of order.

Miss SIMPSON: I am challenging the members of the Labor Party on the Sunshine Coast to stand up with us and oppose a 4,000-inmate prison in south-east Queensland but particularly on the Sunshine Coast. A superjail would also be incompatible with the economic direction of the Sunshine Coast. But what a jail this size also does is creates a culture around it so large that it cannot be integrated into the local community.

Currently, Woodford and Maryborough have about 500 to 600 inmates respectively. This facility will have 4,000 inmates. Wake up to yourselves! It will be too big for any community. I believe that it is only the communities which want them that should have them, but they must be smaller than this or else we will keep perpetuating a culture of crime and we will create problems in that community. I take it that the minister is not opposed to a jail on the Sunshine Coast.

Mr Cummins: I am opposed!

Miss SIMPSON: Well stand up for the Sunshine Coast and oppose a jail of this size anywhere in south-east Queensland. They must be smaller and only in communities that say they want them.

Time expired.