



Speech by

Mark McArdle

MEMBER FOR CALOUNDRA

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SUNSHINE COAST HOSPITAL

Mr McARDLE (Caloundra—Lib) (8.05 pm): It has almost been 12 months since the much vaunted statement was made about a \$500 million hospital being constructed at Sippy Downs. Amongst the fanfare, there were statements by the Premier and the member for Kawana about this much vaunted hospital, together with the photo opportunities and much backslapping, but to date nothing has happened. In fact, the way this saga is being dragged out there is a likelihood of this hospital never being built. The government has got to stop pussy-footing around with this issue and make some determination. I am aware that a draft report has been prepared, but as yet there has been no real movement on this issue.

When it comes down to it, the government is simply not able to make a determination or decision as to where this hospital is supposed to be placed. In the meantime, the people of the Sunshine Coast are going to suffer and continue to suffer because of the ineptitude and feet-dragging exercise of this government. Of course, we cannot expect much more from a health minister who continues to play very loose with the truth and is clearly not able to handle the portfolio at all.

The health minister trots around the state making announcement after announcement yet is unable to come to grips with one of the essential questions for the Sunshine Coast. Where and when is the hospital going to be built? I do not think it can be made plainer than that. Then again maybe the health minister does not have the capacity to determine exactly where it is going to be placed. Perhaps he should surrender his portfolio to someone more qualified or at least able to make a determination.

While this ridiculous charade continues, the people of the Sunshine Coast are left in the dark. The health minister has got to stop sitting on his hands and take some action with regard to the hospital. His inaction is both ridiculous and negligent and I wonder what he has against—and, indeed, what this government has against—the people of the Sunshine Coast. I certainly have not heard anything from the Labor members for Kawana, Noosa and Glass House arguing for the question to be resolved. However, I note that during the recent three- to four-week Gaven by-election campaign the government was able to confirm the location of a new \$500 million hospital on the Gold Coast. In chasing the vote, this government can move quickly and it should be worrying to the Labor members on the Sunshine Coast that the government is showing no urgency in this case.

It is quite clear that the government has no intention of moving forward with this announcement until such time as it can gain a political advantage in doing so. This is beyond the pale and portrays this government as being one without feeling, neglectful and simply irresponsible in handling its true portfolio and position in this state. What we need in this state and on the Sunshine Coast is a government determined to make effective changes and to put in place policy initiatives that will effect change for the people of the Sunshine Coast and make life better across that region. Until such time, we on the Sunshine Coast will continue to suffer at the hands of an inept, sad, sorrowful and pathetic government.

Ms Molloy: You're down the bottom end of the Sunshine Coast.

Mr McARDLE: The better end, as opposed to where you rabble sit in Noosa. The health minister has sat on this matter now for well over 12 months and has done absolutely nothing about it whatsoever.

Time expired.