



Speech by

Fiona Simpson

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

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STATUTORY BODIES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochydore—NPA) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (2.35 pm). In concluding my contribution on the bill I table some figures from Queensland Health which clearly show that all is not healthy in Queensland Health with regard to its industrial relations and its ability not just to recruit but to retain staff. These figures show the number of resignations of medical officers and VMOs, visiting medical officers, who are private sector specialists providing public sector assistance in the public system. They are vital throughout Queensland to maintain a functional health system.

From July 2005 to September 2006 there were 1,127 resignations of VMOs and medical officers. The number of nursing stream resignations in the same period was 2,644. The number of allied health professional and scientist resignations in that period was 1,421. The total number of health resignations over that period was 5,192. I previously alluded to some of the challenges within the ambulance sector. We know that a number of portfolios have a real issue with retention of qualified staff. Child Safety is another arena where there are issues in relation to retention of staff.

If we are to have a public sector in Queensland where people want to work and their skills are utilised there has to be a culture change. There have to be major changes beyond what we saw occur once the lid was lifted on some of the horrendous issues of bullying in the public sector. To date there has been no evidence of a commitment to that by this government. A state coalition government signals that we believe that this is an area that requires a major focus on a reform of the culture to create a workplace of choice rather than where, tragically, there have been workplace cultures that have been toxic and which have resulted in very good people burning out and getting out. It is time that there was a focus on creating a workplace of choice for public employees where they can bring their skills and professional abilities and have a fruitful and long career within the public sector in Queensland.

Once again, I reaffirm the coalition's support for a state based industrial system. The reason we are supporting this legislation is that essentially we believe that the affected employees who are to be brought back under the umbrella of the state system were, in effect, already de facto public sector employees. For that reason we support this legislation. I will table these figures that show the real story in relation to the current state of affairs in Queensland Health for the benefit of the House.

Tabled paper: Table detailing resignation numbers for medical nursing and allied health professionals in Queensland Health, July 2005 to December 2006.