



Speech by

Dr Alex Douglas

MEMBER FOR GAVEN

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GOLD COAST HOSPITAL

Dr DOUGLAS (Gaven—LNP) (10.04 pm): This year the Gold Coast Hospital has some major milestones—4,000 deliveries; 65,000 patient separations from the casualty-emergency department—it is the busiest in the state; and 20 per cent of those are admitted to hospital. There was a record number of elective surgical cases. Tragically it also had the worst Queensland Health payroll failures in the state's history. But most of the building infrastructure is in good shape.

The existing Gold Coast Hospital is a major piece of modern health infrastructure. It is crucially located close to the heart of Southport and is immediately adjacent to major inner Southport roads. It has some older buildings that could be demolished. It is situated immediately adjacent to existing major medical establishments that include radiology; radiotherapy—newly constructed with three new bunkers; specialist outpatient and major pathology services. There is also a very large private inpatient hospital, Allamanda, and a separate series of major modern day hospitals located either side of the central hospital. It has been hard to estimate the true cost of it. But a sum of \$500 million, exclusive of the land, would not be unreasonable to cite. All our transport systems are directed towards it, as is the rapid transit scheme now being proposed.

There is an 1,100 car space council owned car park and parking for over 2,000 cars in a affordable council owned car park located nearby. The main hospital tower is only 30 years old. It is not in danger of collapse and has many years of serviceable use ahead of it. The hospital site is built on reclaimed land, built largely from the former Ferry Road mineral sands facility.

Today, 2,632 Gold Coasters have petitioned to maintain the existing facility in some form so as to maintain a full service and hopefully expand its service onsite. It will then give medical service capacity for the Gold Coast region when the new Gold Coast University Hospital comes on line in 2013. Why were there so many petitioners, you might ask? It is because state Labor will not make a decision on the site and the incumbent government must realize that 'no decision' means nothing is going to happen. Health planning is ultimately all about making a decision, and proper health planning says that decisions are made impartially on the basis of need of patients, and affordability, well in advance to provide certainty to all providers of service.

This existing hospital site needs to be retained as a health facility for the next 30 years, and that is a no-brainer. We need every one of the current 400 plus beds. It is wrong to put doubt out there in the community. Everyone needs certainty. Health decisions are expensive. There are big, long-term implications for an incorrect decision. Near-sighted Brisbane-centric administrative views of the needs of the Gold Coast community may potentially lead to medical disasters. Labor spent 10 years ignoring Robina Hospital, calling it a National Party plot. Similar ignorant views have consigned Coolangatta and now Coomera regions to an even worse situation. Mistakes are made by ignorance and intolerance. To say 'I was not told' is never a defence. The Gold Coast Hospital and site must be retained so as to keep the bed percentage at 1.9 per 1,000 of population.

(Time expired)