




Speech By
Fiona Simpson

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

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ADJOURNMENT

North Coast Rail Line; Sunshine Coast University Hospital

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (12.47 am): I rise to speak in praise of our fantastic \$1.8 billion Sunshine Coast University Hospital. Firstly, however, I want to make a small clarification to my previous speech. The LNP committed to the north coast rail line in its election commitments at the last election and this was to be part of forward budgets on winning government. It is a great shame that it has been put on the never-never by the current government.

With regard to the hospital, I am honoured to see this project come to fruition from its early planning stages through to its first sod turning and then its opening. My Sunshine Coast colleagues and I fought passionately for this facility. It is a game-changer for our region. I want to pay tribute to retiring Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service Chief Executive Officer, Kevin Hegarty, who has been at the helm from the start of the project—from its humble beginnings to its final glorious completion. I want to thank Kevin for his outstanding work to improve the delivery of health services on the Sunshine Coast during his 14 years of service. Kevin has always shown complete professionalism, integrity, enthusiasm and passion for getting the job done and he leaves behind a huge legacy, having recently announced his departure from this role. I wish Kevin and his wife, Judy, all the very best for the future.

I got to know our hospital more personally than I had planned a few weeks ago when I had to go there for treatment after an accident where I dislocated my left shoulder. Obviously I would have preferred not to have had the accident—it was pretty painful—but the care was outstanding. I acknowledge and thank Dr Ben Close, Director of Emergency Medicine, and all his team for the wonderful service, excellent care and attention I received. I know so many people go through accident and emergency departments with far worse injuries than I had, but you really do have complete confidence that you are in the best place. You know you are in the best place to receive the best care. Certainly, the new facilities at the hospital only augment that and many fine health professionals have chosen to come to the Sunshine Coast because of this wonderful new facility. We had some great people before, but it is getting even better. I can now even more fully appreciate our wonderful new public hospital, and I am celebrating with Sunshine Coast residents, particularly those who can now receive treatment closer to home rather than having to travel to Brisbane for some of those services. Our new tertiary level hospital will save Sunshine Coast patients 10,000 trips a year to Brisbane for services such as enhanced trauma services and a range of other services.