

North Coast NATIONALS

DON PAGE MP
Member for Ballina

THOMAS GEORGE MP
Member for Lismore

STEVE CANSDELL MP
Member for Clarence

GEOFF PROVEST MP
Member for Tweed

26 June 2008

Hands off Mur'bah Hospital, North Coast Nats warn

"Murwillumbah community will not accept any cutbacks..." – Thomas George

The four North Coast Nationals State MPs mounted a vigorous defence of Murwillumbah Hospital as Parliament debated its downgrading on Thursday.

Leading the charge, Lismore MP Thomas George whose electorate includes Murwillumbah, told Parliament Labor was embarking on a cost-cutting exercise as a result of poor management of the North Coast Area Health Service.

"Services are cut back so people go to other areas. Statistics are then used to wind back the hospital," Mr George said.

Tweed Nationals MP Geoff Provest said the lemma Government's decision to downgrade Murwillumbah hospital was "nothing short of a disgrace".

He pledged to join Thomas George and the local community in the July 5 protest Murwillumbah march against the Government's plans.

Ballina MP and Shadow Minister for the North Coast, Don Page warned that the community would not tolerate the downgrading of the hospital's maternity unit.

"This unacceptable proposal will put at risk the lives of babies and mothers," he said.

Clarence Nationals MP Steve Cansdell accused Labor of "condemning and penalising country New South Wales health services to prop up problems in Sydney".

"Once the downgrading process starts it continues until it reaches the point where the hospital is closed," Mr Cansdell said.

Speaking in defence of the Government, Labor MP Phillip Costa, claimed the services provided by Murwillumbah hospital were merely "being reviewed to see how they can operate more efficiently".

Mr George wound up the debate saying "the Murwillumbah community will not accept any cutbacks and will continue to fight them by marching in support of Murwillumbah Hospital."

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