

Agreement in Principle

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER (North Shore—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [10.28 a.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now agreed to in principle.

I understand that I will not have sufficient time to complete my agreement in principle speech on the Paediatric Patient Oversight (Vanessa's Law) Bill 2010 this morning, but I want to introduce it now so that this imperative piece of legislation can lie on the table during the break. Warren Anderson, the father of Vanessa Anderson, whilst not present in the gallery, is watching this debate via video screening. It is tragic that it has taken nearly five years for this legislation to return to this Parliament. The Opposition is pursuing this legislation because the practice is still happening to this day.

Whilst giving evidence at a recent hearing of the Health Care Complaints Commission, Mr Anderson commented that instead of appearing before that committee he should have been preparing his speech in celebration of Vanessa's 21st birthday. Vanessa died aged 16 years. I am reintroducing this bill in the vain hope that the Government will support it and that it will prevent the sort of horrific experience the Anderson family endured leading up to Vanessa's death ever happening again. That is why the bill is titled Paediatric Patient Oversight (Vanessa's Law) Bill 2010.

In November 2008 I first introduced this bill but in a slightly different form. At that time I pointed out that the Garling review—a review into acute hospital services that the Government was forced to commission—came about at the recommendation of the Coroner during his findings into Vanessa's death. Mrs Judy Hopwood, the member for Hornsby, and I were present in court on that occasion. Judy has followed this case and has become a very close friend and confidant of the Andersons. In fact, it was at Judy's suggestion that I came up with this legislation, which was quickly supported by my parliamentary colleagues in the Liberal-Nationals Coalition. I know there are members on the opposite side of the Chamber who would like to support the bill. I am appealing to the Minister for Health and to those Labor members to forget their political game playing and to support this bill. I ask those members to look at what the Parliamentary Secretary said when this legislation was last introduced and realise that by making those small modifications the Opposition has addressed the issues raised by the Parliamentary Secretary at that time.