



## **RACHEL NOLAN MP**

### **Member for Ipswich**

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#### **ST ANDREWS FAIL IPSWICH BY ABANDONING PSYCH SERVICES**

St Andrews Hospital is preparing the ground to abandon any genuine commitment to providing psychiatric services, Member for Ipswich Rachel Nolan said today.

“St Andrews’ management is currently planning to cut the number of in-patient psych beds by half and they refuse to commit to maintaining the important day service,” Ms Nolan said.

“Under huge public pressure in September 2004, St Andrew’s made commitments to the public and to me personally that they would work to maintain Cameron Ward, provide a \$50,000 establishment grant to attract a new psychiatrist to Ipswich, maintain the 10 bed in-patient unit in Cameron Ward and maintain the day service which provides support for at least 30 people living with psychiatric conditions in the Ipswich community.

“Now that the dust has settled, St Andrew’s have completely dumped those commitments.

“My clear information is that the current plans St Andrew’s are looking at are for a 4-7 bed psych inpatient unit on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of a new building and no day service.

“Despite clear promises, the \$50,000 establishment grant was not widely advertised, meaning that no genuine efforts have been made to attract a new psychiatrist to Ipswich.

Ms Nolan condemned St Andrew’s for their dishonesty in this debate and for their lack of commitment to genuinely providing care for people in the Ipswich community.

“St Andrew’s have made a series of commitments from which they have then just walked away.

“Psych services are an important part of any community and of any comprehensive hospital but for St Andrew’s it seems to be just all too hard.

“St Andrew’s is not the nice local hospital it once was. It is now part of a big foreign owned company that wants to pick the eyes out of Ipswich by doing the easy profitable work. St Andrews’ owners, Affinity Health, show no concern for the many psych patients who rely on this care just to get by.

“St Andrews’ behaviour is an affront to the whole Ipswich community. Any of us could be struck by a mental illness at any time and St Andrew’s actions prove that they simply don’t care.”

Ms Nolan said that St Andrews’ were motivated by short term financial gain with Affinity Health, a largely foreign company, planning to polish up its hospital assets and list them on the Stock Exchange at a profit.

“That short term financial strategy is all very well for Affinity Health but the market needs to know that much of the value of a hospital like St Andrew’s is in its community good will and with St Andrew’s being dishonest and dumping important services, that good will in the Ipswich community is burning fast.”