



Speech by  
**Mrs NITA  
CUNNINGHAM**

**MEMBER FOR BUNDABERG**

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Hansard 27 August 1998

**RHEUMATOLOGY CLINIC, BUNDABERG**

**Ms NITA CUNNINGHAM** (Bundaberg) (2.09 a.m.): I would like to speak in support of the 5,247 people who signed a petition that was tabled in this House on Thursday morning of this week seeking Government funding to provide for a suitably staffed rheumatology clinic in Bundaberg. Members of the Bundaberg branch of the Arthritis Foundation of Queensland, who are either sufferers themselves or carers, have worked very hard over recent months to gain such strong support and are a fine example of the many groups in communities throughout Queensland who give their time freely to bring inequities to our attention and to help build a better quality of life in their communities. Arthritis is a crippling disease, and the current situation in Bundaberg, which necessitates a four-hour car or bus trip each way for patients to see a specialist, is very difficult for the patients and very painful.

The need for a rheumatology service, even in a visiting capacity, is becoming more urgent, and this need is acknowledged by health care professionals in our city. The Health Minister has advised me that this problem has not previously been brought to her attention, and I am confident that she will look keenly for a possible solution. But I draw this matter to the attention of the House to commend the members of that Bundaberg group, who are very active in providing public displays, seminars and support for arthritis sufferers throughout Bundaberg and the surrounding district and who have been responsible for gathering these signatures. In such a demanding world, it is encouraging to see the effort that these groups in our communities are making to help their own members, and they will be very grateful that their petition has indeed been tabled in this House.

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