



Speech by

**ROSA LEE LONG**

**MEMBER FOR TABLELANDS**

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Hansard 7 November 2001

**ATHERTON HOSPITAL AUXILIARY**

**Ms LEE LONG** (Tablelands—ONP) (2.17 a.m.): The Atherton district is fortunate to have community minded people who are involved in many different volunteer organisations. Without these people and the general public, who continually dig into their pockets, facilities in our area would be very much worse than they are. One such organisation is the Atherton Hospital Auxiliary.

The auxiliary was reformed in 1992 after being dormant for some years. The members fundraised consistently, with the main fundraiser being a weekly bingo session that has been in operation since early 1992. In the nine years to date more than \$200,000 has been raised and spent on equipment for the Atherton Hospital. A number of big ticket items have been purchased from auxiliary funds. Some of these items include a humidicrib; respirator monitor; ECG machine; oxygen monitor; equipment for community health; resuscitation unit; trolley for X-ray outpatients; flotation chair; two trolleys for the operating theatre; patient warming device; space lab monitor and finger sensor, which cost \$14,895; a blood warmer; traction unit; acute monitor and printer for theatre; patient lifting device and sling; blanket warming cabinet; fluid warming unit; and a tympanometer, which is a micro ear testing instrument.

In 1998 the public brought to attention the need for a dialysis unit in Atherton. At that time a significant number of patients requiring dialysis treatment had to travel to Cairns. The medical officer in charge of the Cairns renal unit fully supported the setting up of a unit on the tableland. He believed that a trip to Cairns down either of the range roads did not help the welfare of patients. The Gillies Highway consists of 12 kilometres of extremely winding road. If one is not sick before one commences the trip, it is extremely likely that one will be sick on reaching the end of that road.

A public meeting was called by one of the Atherton shire councillors and all community organisations were invited to be represented. Those present were unanimous that a dialysis unit was needed for the Atherton district and a major fundraising task began. The Atherton Hospital auxiliary launched the fund with a donation of \$10,000. The AMP Society made a significant contribution to the fund as well, and a significant amount of money was raised within six months to purchase two dialysis machines at a cost of \$30,000 each. Atherton Hospital now has a special dialysis unit operating as a satellite unit of the Cairns Base Hospital. In this the Year of the Volunteer I put on record the significant contribution that the Atherton auxiliary is making. Many items purchased from its fundraising would not otherwise be available for patients' comfort and wellbeing at Atherton Hospital.

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