



Speech by

ROSA LEE LONG

MEMBER FOR TABLELANDS

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GARDEN SETTLEMENT OLD PEOPLE'S HOME

Ms LEE LONG (Tablelands—ONP) (10.27 a.m.): I ask members of this House if they enjoy their parliamentary meals. Mine are always delicious, made from good ingredients, well prepared and freshly cooked. The reason I raise this is because while we are able to enjoy all the benefits of freshly prepared food it seems the residents of at least one aged care residential facility in my electorate will soon have to do without such meals. I speak of the introduction of cooked chilled food at the Garden Settlement Old People's Home, a Blue Care facility in Mareeba. Cooked chilled food would see hot meals prepared elsewhere which are chilled and stored until eventually reheated for consumption. Blue Care is an arm of the Uniting Church of Australia and now manages Garden Settlement, which was initially established and developed through the efforts of the local branch of the Uniting Church, the community and government. It has a kitchen which is now, and has for a long time, provided well for the residents. The Garden Settlement is home to these residents and this is their kitchen. The food prepared is, in that regard, a home-cooked meal.

The proposal to bring cooked chilled food from Cairns at the cost of local jobs and business is one that strikes at the core of aged care. This scheme seems all about putting the bottom line before consideration of the residents. In an age of women's rights, men's rights, children's rights, gay rights, embryo rights, right to life, freedom of choice, indigenous rights, ethnic rights, religious rights and cultural rights, the rights of our seniors to a decent fresh meal is not too much to ask. I am sure all honourable members agree that respect for our elders extends to the food we expect them to eat. The local members of the AWU have joined in the fight to preserve the kitchen operations at the Garden Settlement. I express my support for the local jobs and businesses which would be lost if cooked chilled food was used and, most importantly, the rights of the residents to fresh home-cooked hot meals.
