



Speech by

Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR DALRYMPLE

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ATHERTON HOSPITAL, CT SCANNER

Mr KNUTH (Dalrymple—LNP) (11.55 am): Yesterday I tabled a petition with more than 7,050 signatories regarding the lack of a CT scanner at the Atherton Hospital. This petition was borne out of the frustration and emotional trauma of many patients who are forced to go to other major hospitals for diagnosis. I acknowledge the announcement by the Minister for Health to make provision to call for tenders for the CT scanner at the Atherton Hospital. I welcome this announcement. But these 7,050 signatories to this petition provide evidence that the people of my electorate are serious about getting a CT scanner for Atherton Hospital, which has been promised and for which Tablelanders have been waiting for up to five years.

Local medicos are threatening to leave the area unless the state government comes good on this promise. Each year, 1,000 patients from the Tablelands are forced to travel to Cairns to receive scans. The need for a CT scanner for Atherton Hospital is one of the most important issues for the Atherton Tablelands and also for the city of Cairns and its surrounding districts as 1,337 people are waiting to receive elective surgery at the Cairns Base Hospital, which is stretched to capacity. A CT scanner would alleviate the pressure on the Cairns Base Hospital by allowing surgery to take place at the Atherton Hospital. It would also save patients and taxpayers their massive transport costs and wasted travel time. It would also take the pressure off the roads.

To provide this scanner is just plain common sense. It costs about \$500 to transport patients from Atherton to Cairns by ambulance and by helicopter about \$6,000 per hour. If we add to that cost the cost of an accompanying nurse we see that not having a CT scanner at Atherton Hospital is an extreme waste of resources and time. A CT scanner provides a whole range of surgical diagnosis, including safe post-operative care. It is beyond comprehension that a CT scanner was not provided at Atherton Hospital years ago. I call on the minister to continue with his commitment, not delay it, and provide that scanner.