



Speech by

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MEMBER FOR DALRYMPLE

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CROHN'S DISEASE; CROWN LAND

Mr KNUTH (Dalrymple—LNP) (5.35 pm): One of my constituents suffers from a little-known and little-understood disease: Crohn's disease. I wish to bring to the attention of the House information on this serious medical condition. It is an inflammatory disease of the intestines causing ulceration of the small and large intestines, fever, pain, fatigue, stunted growth in children, arthritis and a wide variety of other symptoms. Treatment is life-long, subjecting the sufferer to repeated bowel surgery and long, painful recovery. Crohn's disease receives little assistance from either the federal or the state government, which suggests that there is ignorance about its severity, the debilitation it causes and the dreadful effects that it has on the human body.

My constituent reported confusion with her management recently when she was rushed to her local GP. The doctor called an ambulance to take her to the local public hospital, where she was to collect a form and be taken immediately to a surgeon and specialist who were waiting in a private hospital in Townsville. It was five hours before she eventually arrived at the private hospital in Townsville. My constituent claims this was due to a lack of understanding of Crohn's disease and the imperative to receive immediate treatment when the symptoms she displayed were evident. Her GP explained that these symptoms indicated an emergency. Since some medical and paramedical staff so infrequently see or hear of this illness, they often fall into the trap of assuming Crohn's disease is always a chronic problem and as such the patient's condition does not necessarily become an emergency. Sadly, this is not the case and more often than not, in addition to severe pain, the patient may suffer a serious life-threatening acute problem. Five hours wait can be the difference between life and death.

The real problem seems to be a lack of understanding of the disease and its treatment. Traditional treatment may exacerbate the condition. The amount spent by the federal government on Crohn's disease is 0.1 per cent of one per cent of the Health budget. On behalf of my constituent and others in similar circumstances, I appeal to this government for its support and for it to encourage the federal government to increase funding for research into this disease.

On another matter, my office has been inundated with calls asking how this government can justify a 500 per cent increase for crown land that is in some instances, by the department's own admission, unsellable and unusable. Many of the people who have contacted my office have offered to purchase the land but have been informed by the Department of Natural Resources that the land is unable to be sold. When one lady who leases land upon which there has been a road closure asked if the road will be reopened at any stage she was told that there was no chance it would be. In a bizarre twist, one leaseholder who offered to surrender his lease was told that he would still have to pay the increased rent for the 2010-11 financial year in advance and then an extra \$160 for the privilege of surrendering land he does not use or want.

The increase has affected leaseholders across the state, many of whom require the lease as a condition for subdivision or to access water for their homes. There is no justification for this blanket increase. It is just another way this government has devised to kick Queenslanders in the guts and rob them while they are down to pay off its debt and mismanagement.