




Speech by  
**Bill Byrne**

**MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON**

Hansard Thursday, 31 May 2012

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## **ROCKHAMPTON BASE HOSPITAL, HELICOPTER LANDING PAD**

 **Mr BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (3.04 pm): In advance of the recent election campaign, I advocated strongly in support of the construction of a new emergency helicopter landing and reception area into Rockhampton Base Hospital. I also used this issue as a catalyst to incorporate the possibility of solving the unacceptable parking dilemmas that are ever present and impacting on patients and staff alike. There is nobody of any political colour in Central Queensland who contests the basic facts of this matter.

The previous helicopter landing area was never particularly capable and was certainly unable to cope with larger aircraft. This area is no longer available to rotary aircraft. The situation today is that patients are landed at the Rockhampton airport, cross-loaded to a ground ambulance and delivered to an emergency department at Rockhampton hospital. Even in the best of circumstances this transfer must add 10 minutes or more to the time of delivering a patient to the emergency department. This situation remains, and sooner or later someone will lose their life unnecessarily. It is an uncontested fact that severe trauma patients have a rapidly diminishing prognosis if they do not reach emergency surgery or emergency departments within 60 minutes or so. The data validating this window was comprehensively proven during recent conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In April I was pleased to note the member for Mirani stated in the Rockhampton press that he had vowed to lobby for a helicopter landing pad at Rockhampton hospital. He went on to describe that it was vital for emergency choppers to carry patients in need to immediate life-saving treatment to be able to land in the hospital complex. We agree on something certainly. The member for Mirani did not miss the opportunity to give the previous Labor government a spray and I accept that is part of the game. He went on to say that the health minister had been told that finding money to build this helipad was an urgent priority.

I am not familiar with the way in which the government operates internally. However, it would be fairly embarrassing for the member for Mirani if this project were not given support in the next budget. I can only assume that this project will be funded in the September budget and congratulate the member for Mirani and the health minister in advance on that announcement.

I conclude by saying that this investment is just as important to other members in this House, including the member for Gladstone, as it is for me. I will conclude with the member for Mirani's own words when he said, 'It's not far, but it takes vital minutes to unload a patient into a vehicle. A modern hospital must have a landing pad. A helipad had to be funded at some time and I will continue to make it clear that it should be sooner rather than later,' and he is exactly right.