




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR DALRYMPLE

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ADJOURNMENT

Atherton Aero Club

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (9.36 pm): The Atherton Aero Club is a group of aviation enthusiasts from around the Far North Queensland region. Atherton Aero Club has 54 members who are involved in all facets of aviation, from microlights to general aviation. Some members are actively involved in building aircraft and most members fly aircraft. However, they also have a great passion to build a storage shed and shelter for paramedics and the Royal Flying Doctor Service for the benefit of the whole community. The shelter will provide protection from the elements, which sometimes can be extreme, sometimes hot and many times raining as pilots and paramedics wait for patient transfers from the Atherton hospital ambulance to the Royal Flying Doctor Service. At times, the ambulance has to wait until the Royal Flying Doctor Service arrives, but there is nowhere for them to park. At other times, the Royal Flying Doctor Service arrives and the patient becomes unstable so the ambulance has to return to the hospital, leaving the Royal Flying Doctor Service crew to wait till they return, but they too have no shelter.

The Atherton Aero Club would like to erect a storage shed for the club's equipment, which includes a live weather feed that updates to their website, offering pilots up-to-date weather conditions at the airstrip. The Tablelands Regional Council has provided a block of land that had been marked out close to the existing toilet block and has confirmed a 30-year lease. Currently, if an ambulance is sent back to the hospital, pilots or paramedics just have to sit and wait for the patient to return. They sit outside or in their plane in the heat, wind and rain, with no shelter and no facilities.

The multipurpose facility will provide much needed shelter, chairs and basic facilities such as tea and coffee. The Atherton Aero Club has some cash to contribute and has started raising funds publicly. The estimated funding shortage is around \$25,000. It is fundraising to establish a common area for all users that would promote strong relationships. The facility would be available for all airport users. Visiting pilots and passengers will be able to make a cup of tea, take shelter and talk to fellow aviators who are locals from the area. The Atherton Aero Club has a live weather station that assists visiting pilots. Traffic at the airport is limited to mostly aircraft personnel and the members of the aero club.

The facility would be of great benefit to visitors, as well as provide much needed shelter and a place to rest for the Royal Flying Doctor Service pilots and paramedics to rest in relative comfort while they wait for patients to transfer between lifesaving services. I will be working with the Atherton Aero Club, the relevant agencies, the departments and the ministers to source the support and funding to erect the shelter for the benefit of the Royal Flying Doctor Service, paramedics and the whole community.