



Speech By  
**Brittany Lauga**


**MEMBER FOR KEPPEL**

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Record of Proceedings, 15 October 2015

**PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT**

**Rockhampton Hospital, Cancer Services**

 **Mrs LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (2.51 pm): Thursday, 8 October 2015 was a very important day in the delivery of the history of healthcare services in Central Queensland. Around 500 Central Queenslanders each year will benefit from new cancer treatment services following the opening of Rockhampton Hospital's cancer services building last week by our Minister for Health and Ambulance Services, the Hon. Cameron Dick. The new cancer services building houses three floors of cancer services, which includes day treatment and inpatient beds for overnight care, staff office space, an expanded intensive care unit, two general hospital wards, a plant room and the rooftop helipad. The opening of the new cancer services building means that people living with cancer in Central Queensland can have their treatment closer to home instead of having to travel long distances. Having cancer is traumatic enough without being separated from your family and friends and other support networks. With this facility, people in Central Queensland who require treatment for cancer can have their family and friends around them at a time when they really need such support. It is important to realise that we are dealing with people and people with cancer need to have the best possible chance of beating it. Having facilities close to home gives them that chance.

The origins of the centre go back to 2006 when Stephen Robertson was minister for health and Peter Beattie was premier, when provision was made for a cancer centre in Rockhampton. This building has been a long time coming and my colleague Minister Bill Byrne, member for Rockhampton, has been a strong advocate for the centre along with former state and federal members Robert Schwarten and Kirsten Livermore. It was then Prime Minister Julia Gillard in 2011 who committed the \$140 million needed for the project, and I thank the federal Liberal government for continuing this project started under a Labor government.

The centre will provide a better quality of life for the people of Keppel, Rockhampton and Central Queensland more broadly. This centre will save Central Queensland lives. Currently, less than one-third of Central Queensland cancer patients receive radiotherapy treatment and they have to travel to Townsville or Brisbane for treatment. That is two-thirds who do not access this potentially lifesaving therapy and are at a significantly higher risk of an early death. Patients at the hospital have already started receiving chemotherapy and other cancer treatments, but this facility has three radiation oncology bunkers and room for two linear accelerators for the future delivery of a radiation oncology service, which I understand is not far away.

Many thanks go to the Chairman of the Central Queensland Health and Hospital Service Board, Charles Ware; CEO Len Richards; and all the staff who have played a role in delivering the new centre. Many thanks go also to the doctors and nurses who had to put up with the inconvenience, the security people who had to tell patients and visitors the best way to get into the hospital, the wardies, the administrators and everyone who works at the hospital. Congratulations also to the tradies for whom this has been their daily work site for several years and the builders Hansen Yuncken.