




Speech By
Stephen Bennett

MEMBER FOR BURNETT

Record of Proceedings, 3 June 2015

ADJOURNMENT

Childers, Hydrotherapy Pool

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (11.50 pm): In a callous move, Labor's health minister has shown his contempt for regional communities by backing away from a key promise of a heated hydrotherapy pool for the Childers community. A community led campaign calling on the minister to restore the funding of \$300,000 has fallen on deaf ears. Many in this little rural community have told me of the great disappointment they feel as they make the long trek to Bundaberg for hydrotherapy rehabilitation following trauma accidents, surgeries and crippling disease.

There is no question in my mind that the decision to scrap this project was politically motivated and malicious. The people of Isis are victims in a nasty political game. Having brought their community and the Bruce Highway to a halt in a street march to show their disgust, they continue to rise up and demand that the minister shows he cares for the bush. The march was a great example of over 100 community members wanting what is rightly theirs. Protesters made their way down the street from the Isis Club, crossed at the lights with police assisting and finished at the Isis War Memorial Swimming Pool, where a meeting was held immediately following the march.

When we see the minister throwing millions of dollars from an operating surplus at waiting lists to make the waiting lists worse, it begs the question why Childers is missing out. In an important show of support, many people put their names to petitions, both paper and online, requesting the Labor government to reinstate funding for this vital resource in Childers. Mrs Jo Jennings of Childers is the last in a long line of people to write to me on behalf of the elderly, cancer patients, amputees and children with disabilities. I table that letter for the minister's reference.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 10 May 2015, from Mrs J Jennings to the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services, Hon. Cameron Dick, regarding funding for a hydrotherapy pool for the Childers area. [\[529\]](#)

She wrote to me imploring the health minister to reverse his decision. This non-chemical, non-invasive treatment has been known to work miracles in many medical situations. It is a low-cost therapy that saves the medical system money in the long term as people regain their lives and the strength of their limbs through gentle water exercise. Having an indoor heated pool in the community would provide a place for our precious children to learn to swim without the risk of sunburn, and they would gain a life skill that could save their lives in the future. It would give the local swimming club the ability to train all year round and attract local swim meets and carnivals. That is a win-win for the community and local businesses, with more visitors attracted from out of town.

The message from this community is clear. On their behalf, I call on the minister to reverse his hard-hearted decision and show compassion for the people, young and old, of Childers. If he continues to refuse their one simple wish, which was already committed and funded, then he should have the decency to visit the Childers community and have the guts to look the people who want to learn to swim and the patients recovering from serious injuries in the eye and tell them why they

cannot have their life-changing pool. There is also the issue of the expected two permanent jobs and four part-time jobs that will not eventuate.

Letters have been written to Annastacia Palaszczuk, Cameron Dick and Leanne Donaldson. The letters talk about a diagnosis of cancer, treatment of chemotherapy and radium, and people having to travel 56 kilometres to receive important treatment. The effect on one's body is traumatic and the side effects can be long lasting or permanent without suitable rehabilitation facilities. For both cancer and heart patients, the ability to access a pool all year round for exercise is vital and should be provided in a timely manner. People need to return to work, to be proactive in the community and to have a sense of self-worth after debilitating health issues. The people of Childers and surrounding communities expect and deserve access to high-quality healthcare services, and they have every right to feel betrayed by this Labor government. Childers is a very strong and determined community. Give them their hydrotherapy pool.