




Speech By
Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR DALRYMPLE

Record of Proceedings, 23 March 2017

PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Charters Towers, Dialysis Services

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (2.30 pm): Yesterday I tabled a combined petition on behalf of the residents of the Charters Towers district—a nonconforming petition with 1,332 signatures and a conforming petition with 646 signatures. The petitions read that the residents of the Charters Towers district draw to the attention of the House that the lack of a dialysis machine in Charters Towers forces patients needing dialysis to access this service in Townsville, 130 kilometres away.

Patients needing dialysis are very unwell and mostly elderly. The round trip by road takes about three hours. For patients who use walkers or need access to toilets, bus travel is unsuitable. Elderly patients who are unable to travel by bus have to find somebody to drive them to and from Townsville, sometimes necessitating a relative taking time off work to do so. Patients return exhausted. They may have to do that trip up to three times each week. The petition therefore requests the House to take immediate action to provide appropriate dialysis treatment in the public health system in Charters Towers, enabling all patients with dialysis needs to access this service without travelling gruelling distances.

We have been fighting for dialysis services in Charters Towers for a long time—for years. Sadly, some patients needing dialysis have since passed away or moved on. It is heartbreaking to think of the extra pain and anxiety they would endure travelling to and from Townsville so often. We are failing to take appropriate care of sick people in our community. We are getting caught up in the nitty-gritty details while people continue to suffer. We need appropriate services that meet the needs of patients in Charters Towers requiring dialysis.

Pauline Hedges is an 84-year-old from Pentland who is surviving on only one kidney. She has been told to travel the 500 kilometre round trip to Townsville from her home once a week. It is a crying shame that an unwell 84-year-old is taking it upon herself to fight for a dialysis machine by starting this petition.

Charters Towers resident Pam Jenkin has been travelling to and from Townsville three days a week for three years to receive dialysis treatment while she is waiting for a kidney transplant. She travels by bus and is so exhausted and in such a bad state when she comes home that it is heartbreaking for her family. She said that the travel was too much or impossible for some patients and they would rather die than put themselves through this.

We all know rural communities are disadvantaged, but this is unacceptable. Smaller places have access to these services. We call on this House to take immediate action to provide this vital dialysis treatment at the public health service in Charters Towers.