




Speech By
Dale Last

MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN

Record of Proceedings, 20 September 2018

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Burdekin Electorate, Aged Care

 **Mr `LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (2.06 pm): I rise to speak about the provision of aged care in the Burdekin and, in particular, the Lower Burdekin Home for the Aged Society, a two-campus aged-care provider located in the Burdekin. This 40-year-old business is run by a not-for-profit board and is home to 173 residents, directly employing 220 staff, under the supervision and care of the CEO Jim Collins.

The society started with independent living for the aged, but is now exclusively dedicated to acute and subacute care for our frail and elderly. Urgent changes are required to the LBHA in response to new challenges brought about by new rules to the aged care sector in Australia. Residential aged care is now late stage of care that follows a progression of supported living and care supplied to recipients in their own home. Most Burdekin people are enjoying supported living in their home when before that they may have been provided with care in a low-care environment such as that offered by an aged-care facility. We know that the individual's decision to move into residential aged care is left much later. The effect has been dramatic and it means the low-care accommodation provided by the Lower Burdekin Home for the Aged no longer has any appeal or demand in the Burdekin community. Instead, the demand is for more high-care settings with full-time nursing and hospital grade equipment.

Unfortunately, not enough of the LBHA beds suit that need. Parts of the facility are no longer fit for purpose. Currently the joint facilities are short 20 physical places for the elderly, meaning no beds. An additional 20 other places are using shared ablution facilities, which in today's society is unacceptable. It is projected that this community will require 230 residential placements in aged care by 2023.

Due diligence studies show that without immediate changes to the business, including rationalisations and new infrastructure build, LBHA has an uncertain future. Expenditure of \$3 million in works in the last two years to meet a 40 per cent increase—14 beds—in local dementia care places only scratches the surface of the demands in this area. To meet this change the LBHA has committed to a new nursing home in Ayr. To achieve the new nursing home they will need to revise the way they do business and respond to the new levels of care demanded by the Burdekin. The program will take three years to fully implement. The scale of the task is significant. It is critical to act now and build 45 places in stage 1. Government funding of \$7.5 million is required. A further \$4 million will be provided by LBHA. If this building work goes ahead, LBHA will be able to complete the second stage and continue to support the elderly residents of the Burdekin. On behalf of the LBHA I call on government at all levels to support the LBHA in its funding application which will allow for the care of our elderly citizens and the ongoing employment of 200 persons in the Burdekin region.