



Speech By  
**Barry O'Rourke**


**MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON**

---

Record of Proceedings, 5 September 2019

**PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT**

**Telehealth**

 **Mr O'ROURKE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (2.47 pm): Telehealth is a game changer for Central Queensland and a key part of the Palaszczuk government's \$361 million Specialist Outpatient Strategy. It is helping people access specialist services sooner, reducing waiting times and travel for patients, families and carers. It is also helping us to close the gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in remote communities.

Central Queensland is a key hub for telehealth services. The Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service has developed a telehealth strategy and telehealth road map to support increased services. Every Central Queensland facility that delivers acute and outpatient services now has access to telehealth services, with approximately 60 different disciplines now available across the region.

I think when people hear the word 'telehealth', they think of a teleconference—a medical consultation by Skype. It is so much more than that. People can do a cardiac stress test via telehealth from Longreach in Central West Queensland and have a clinician at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital controlling the speed of the treadmill and checking the readout. It is amazing technology that leaves the NBN for dead and delivers real quality-of-life improvements for people in regional Queensland.

People can now have a tele-stress test straightaway at the Rockhampton emergency department. Rockhampton Hospital also runs the biggest telehealth orthopaedics service in Queensland, with 2,800 consultations provided in 2018-19 so far.

Almost half of the telehealth orthopaedic consultations that have been provided throughout Queensland have happened in Rockhampton. Before telehealth, Central Queenslanders had to travel to Rockhampton, Gladstone or even Brisbane for testing. Cancer patients living in Emerald, Gladstone and Biloela can now access a remote chemotherapy telehealth service without travelling to Rockhampton. People on the Capricorn Coast who have life-limiting illnesses can now get their palliative care in their own communities via telehealth.

The Palaszczuk government has always understood that regional Queenslanders deserve the same quality of health care that people receive in the south-east. Telehealth is one of the incredible tools that we are using to make sure that every Queenslanders gets world-class services.