




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Aged Care

 **Mr O'ROURKE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (2.09 pm): I was a member of the 56th Parliament's health committee which held hearings all over the state regarding aged care in Queensland. Our committee heard numerous stories from family members of what they see as a gross underfunding of the aged-care sector. We heard horrific stories of people waiting in excess of four years for their approved in-home support packages to be delivered. Unfortunately, some had passed away before they received the support they needed. The delays in receiving their funding support packages have a flow-on effect, with increases in hospital admission as a direct result of injury.

Leading Age Services Australia has released a report stating there are approximately 200 aged-care facilities that are at an unacceptable risk of going broke. Insufficient federal funding has led to stories that we heard, such as: some aged-care facilities have not provided high-quality care for the residents; some are so underfunded they are running on skeleton staffing; residents are waiting 15 or 20 minutes from when they have pressed the buzzer for assistance, resulting in falls et cetera; and some residents had soiled themselves, and the loss of dignity was and is terrible. This is an absolute disgrace. An article in this week's Rockhampton *Morning Bulletin* stated—

Nearly 800 Central Queenslanders are on the Federal Government's aged care waiting list, including 570 deemed to need the two highest levels of care offered.

The federal Home Care Packages Program is meant to help older Australians who want to continue to live independently in their own homes.

In a recent Senate Community Affairs Committee Question on Notice, it was revealed that as of September 30 last year, 797 people in Rockhampton, Gladstone, and the Central Highlands had been approved for Home Care, but had not received the appropriate help.

The staff who work in the aged-care system do an amazing job. They do the best they can with limited staffing resources. The report of the royal commission into aged care was released on 1 March and it made 148 recommendations; it was absolutely appalling. I just hope that the federal government implements its findings. We must see a comprehensive response, not more bandaid solutions. Our parents and grandparents need to be looked after and provided with high-quality care in a timely way. I just hope that the federal government addresses these findings.