




Speech By
Dale Last

MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN

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ADJOURNMENT

Ayr Hospital, CT Scanner

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (7.00 pm): What price do we put on human life? What price do we put on the quality of life? It is a question that has been pondered for years in this place, but it is a question that the Burdekin Community Advisory Network has actually been able to answer. In the Burdekin area, that price is \$2.8 million—the price of installing a CT scanner at the Ayr Hospital. As it stands today, up to 15 patients a week are forced to make the journey to Townsville—a 180-kilometre round trip. What about the people who do not have access to transport? They rely on our already overstretched Ambulance Service and have a wait of up to five hours. The paramedics and ambulance staff in Ayr and Home Hill do their absolute best every single day to care for residents of the Burdekin as well as the people who travel the long stretch of the Bruce Highway that runs through the electorate. Just like their colleagues in many areas throughout the state in other emergency services, their resources are often stretched, but still this government refuses to commit to funding a CT scanner at the Ayr Hospital.

Recent media reports refer to a 58-year-old woman who presented in Ayr with symptoms of a stroke. This woman needed to be taken to Townsville for a CT scan, but the ambulance and a hospital staff member were already on the way to Townsville with another patient. In this case the patient's diagnosis and treatment were delayed, but it could have been much worse. Just a week ago, at the opening of a new ward at the Townsville University Hospital, the federal assistant health minister said—

We know that health outcomes are so much better, if someone can be seen quickly and safely triaged ...

As Kaylee Bocalatte, chair of the Burdekin Community Advisory Network, said, this project is about improving equity of access and catering to an ageing population.

There is no doubt that a CT scanner at the Ayr Hospital would ensure better health outcomes. This government has the opportunity to deliver those better outcomes. I call on the minister to do exactly that by funding this vital equipment in the upcoming budget. The last thing we need is a repeat of the Bowen Hospital CT scanner situation. It took seven long years to get that CT scanner in place in an upgrade to the medical imaging facility at that particular hospital. What a difference that has made to that community and the neighbouring community of Collinsville. It is that flow-on effect. As I like to say, just because you live in rural and regional Queensland it should not mean that you do not have access to those types of services. The provision of a CT scanner at the Ayr Hospital would make a massive difference to that community. I am glad that the minister is here tonight to hear me request funding in the upcoming budget for that particular item of equipment.