



Speech By
Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR HILL

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ADJOURNMENT

Telestroke Service

 **Mr KNUTH** (Hill—KAP) (7.19 pm): There is no denying that access to basic health services in regional, rural and remote Queensland is rapidly declining. GP medical practices are closing in regional centres, which is coupled with the closure of maternity services plus the postponement of vital surgeries. Those living in small communities have no option but to travel for hours just to get a prescription filled. However, I point out that there could be some good news for Queenslanders. There is one health initiative that the government can immediately action by introducing a dedicated statewide telestroke service. Telestroke is ready to go so I urge the minister to act quickly as this service will save lives. Every state in the country has a telestroke service except Queensland. There is no argument, spin or reason why it should not be adopted by the state government.

In November last year I put a question to the health minister about adopting a telestroke service. I received, in part, the following response—

Queensland Health is leading a statewide reform agenda to transform the future of our health system, which includes the consideration of a state-wide telestroke service.

This work is still in the consultation and development phase and therefore we are unable to advise a current timeline nor outcomes from this important phase.

While I appreciate the minister at least giving some hope to Queenslanders, this statement provides no clear answer on implementing a telestroke service.

The statistics speak for themselves. Stroke is one of Australia's biggest killers. It kills more women than breast cancer and more men than prostate cancer. More than 80 per cent of strokes can be prevented. Regional Australians are 17 per cent more likely to suffer a stroke than those living in metropolitan areas. Every 90 minutes someone in Australia will suffer a stroke and by 2050, without action, that number will increase to a stroke every 10 minutes.

An estimated 24,700 Australians suffered a stroke for the first time in their lives in 2020. Many of those were experienced by people living in rural and regional Australia. In our state, over 5,000 people will suffer a stroke for the first time this year, with 25 per cent of Queenslanders experiencing a stroke in their lifetime, providing ample reasons why this service needs to be adopted immediately. I call on the Minister for Health to make a quick decision to implement a statewide telestroke service.