



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**Main Committee**

**STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

**Health Services: Weipa**

**SPEECH**

**Wednesday, 21 August 2002**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

---

## SPEECH

**Date** Wednesday, 21 August 2002  
**Page** 5422  
**Questioner**  
**Speaker** Entsch, Warren, MP

**Source** House  
**Proof** No  
**Responder**  
**Question No.**

**Mr ENTSCHE** (Leichhardt—Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Industry, Tourism and Resources) (9.43 am)—I rise to offer my very strong support for the Weipa town committee chairman, Michael Rowland, and the Weipa community generally in their endeavours to have an appropriate health service—in particular, a new hospital—in the Weipa town area. We have an absolutely disgraceful situation up there at the moment in that the hospital is half-a-dozen demountables, serving a population in the Weipa-Western Cape area of some 10,442 people. There are two other health regions in the area that are very similar that you can draw comparisons with: the Torres Strait and the northern peninsula area of Bamaga.

For a population of 10,442 people in Weipa, covering an area of 14,000 square kilometres, there are 16 beds located among these demountables, one permanent doctor, no specialist services, no visiting specialist services, no primary health care, no aged care and no dentist. In the Torres Strait, with a population of only 8,306 and an area of 908 square kilometres, there are 38 beds, seven permanent doctors, a whole range of specialist services, a whole range of visiting specialists, a primary health care centre, aged care facilities and two public dentists. In the NPA, with a population of 1,745 people and an area of 171 square kilometres, there are 15 beds in a brand-new facility, three doctors, a range of specialist services including visiting specialists, a primary health care centre, an aged care facility and a public dentist. So you can understand that the community of Weipa feels extremely deprived.

I know that health professionals in the Weipa community are working very hard to deliver what they can, but it is not enough. Recently, the community offered 50 acres of a greenfield site in Weipa as their contribution towards a new facility. The state Minister for Health, Wendy Edmond, said that it was not necessary, that the community had had enough. I think that is an absolute disgrace, and I am calling on the state Minister for Health, Wendy Edmond, to engage with the community, offer support and talk to the community about getting an appropriate facility in the Weipa area. It is a disgrace that the community has to endure what limited facilities are there, and I would hope that she would listen to Michael Rowland and the Weipa community and start a process so that we can deliver appropriate health services in that region.