



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Main Committee

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

**Ballarat Electorate: Ballan
District Health and Care**

SPEECH

Thursday, 31 May 2007

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Questioner
Speaker King, Catherine, MP

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Ms KING (Ballarat) (9.42 am)—Ballan District Health and Care have been providing health and residential aged-care services to the community of Ballan and district since the 1960s. Commencing operation as a Victorian bush nursing hospital, today they provide a broad range of acute, community health and aged residential care services. I particularly want to acknowledge the terrific work they do in the area of respite care, high-care nursing home care and dementia care. They do an absolutely fantastic job, but they need government support to expand their facilities and the types of services that they can provide to the local community. With Moorabool shire being the third fastest growing shire in Victoria, and much of that growth extending past Ballan, there is an increasing demand for and expectation of the health service. There is a desperate need to expand the infrastructure at Ballan District Health and Care to accommodate growing demand for access to allied health, dental health and other community health services.

Dental health is of particular concern to people who live in the Ballan area. When Ballan District Health and Care did a survey of the local community as to what their health needs were, it was identified as the highest priority. With the nearest public dental chairs in Ballarat and Sunshine, and with waiting lists for public dental care blowing out to 650,000 since the Howard government scrapped the Commonwealth Dental Scheme, access to affordable dental care has almost become non-existent for Ballan residents. The acute hospital facilities also need expansion. The infrastructure for private acute care is desperately inadequate and outdated. There are limited numbers of ensuite rooms available, with the last major capital work being undertaken almost a decade ago. There is also a shortage of beds, with, on many occasions, local residents not being able to access a private acute bed. In an area such as Ballan, with a growing and ageing population, action needs to be taken now.

Even the current level of demand is putting strain on the Ballan District Health and Care service, exposing their current infrastructure deficiencies. To combat this, Ballan District Health and Care want to create a one-stop primary care facility which will combine dental, physiotherapy, podiatry, psychology and family support services all under the one roof. This will only increase the quality and accessibility of their local health service. These initiatives are definitely worthy of federal and state government support. In partnership with the local community, I look forward to a favourable response from the federal government to the Ballan District Health and Care's application for rural medical services. I hope that that application is looked upon favourably and that we have some good news shortly.