First rural renal dialysis unit in Wide Bay offers hope for kidney patients

Childers resident Rebecca Robinson is a dialysis patient whose life has been transformed by a new State Government program funding better rural renal services in the Wide Bay.

Rebecca now uses the first renal dialysis facility ever established in a rural setting in the Wide Bay instead of travelling from her home town to Bundaberg for treatment.

“Dialysis doesn’t rule me anymore,” Rebecca said.

“I used to travel to Bundaberg three times a week, the dialysis treatment took six and a half hours each day to set up and do, and I had two hours travel time on top of that.

“Now I can treat myself in Childers whenever I want, across more days for fewer hours each day, provided I do my 15 hours a week.”

Rebecca has a long history of kidney problems since an auto-immune disease damaged her kidneys when she was 12. She began dialysis at 19, underwent a kidney transplant in 2002 and resumed dialysis in 2009 after kidney failure.

“For the people of the Childers region who suffer from kidney disease, and their families and carers, this is a great step forward,” Health Minister Lawrence Springborg said.

“Nobody should be a prisoner to dialysis and the new renal dialysis service at Childers Hospital lets patients take back control of their lives.

“I am optimistic this is just the beginning of better access to dialysis in the rural areas of the Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service.”

The fast tracking of the new renal unit was made possible after the internal transfer of aged-care residents into the recently opened, million dollar residential wing of Childers Hospital freed up floor space.

This self-care satellite service is funded under the State Government's Revitalisation of Regional, Rural and Remote Health Services 2013-14.

Funds come from a $902,000 grant to improve health services across the eight rural facilities within the WBHHS region.

WBHHS renal services clinicians have already ordered two new renal dialysis units and are hopeful they will replace the existing unit at Childers by early 2014.
“Up until now, patients’ lives revolved around having to travel for renal dialysis,” WBHHS nurse unit manager renal services Robyn Pollock said.

“It was a regimented existence that dictated how they lived.

“Having a hospital-based renal dialysis machine in Childers really turns things around for people in the region.”

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