

Scott Hawkins, of Salisbury, Queensland, writes:

Scott Hawkins, of Salisbury, Queensland, writes:

I am a home haemo-dialysis patient in Brisbane. I studied nursing in Armidale and have fond memories of practicals at Tamworth Base Hospital.

I have been dialysing at home for six years and spend a day each month in the unit for transplant bloods etc.

I don't understand why it would be so expensive to put a dialysis machine into Gunnedah hospital. A Fresenius or Gambro can be had for under \$20,000. The companies will generally train a few nurses and they don't require dedicated staff, although that is preferable.

During the 90s, Manning Base Hospital (Taree) had one machine which they pulled out for holiday patients and staffed with a nurse who normally worked in A&E and ICU.

It can certainly be done. I have dialysed in country towns up and down the east coast from Ballarat to Cairns, whilst on holidays. I have a grey nomad friend who has dialysed in Cairns, Bundaberg, Hobart, Launceston, Ballarat, Darwin, Hervey Bay and many more.

Unfortunately, the bush rarely gets its share. The smaller country hospitals tend to get forgotten, however it can be achieved!

If you are looking for inspiration, google Western Desert dialysis – \$15.3million of federal money has just been granted to an old friend of mine who also studied nursing in Armidale.

This money is to be spent on the very worthwhile project of dialysing Aboriginal people on their own land.

Also, google nXstage for a different perspective on the problem. I know they are keen to gain access in Australia and their machines are currently used in Cairns both in-centre and in places like Palm Island. These machines are portable and are available for holiday use for patients in Brisbane.

I think people in the bush need to think about how they vote and make their seats as marginal as possible so they get the attention they deserve. You need to be able to replicate what Wilke has done in Hobart. That is never going to happen whilst the conservatives have you lock stock, unfortunate but true!

Good luck Gunnedah, you should have a machine in your hospital. Make Barnaby work for his money and I will see you for holiday dialysis soon. (I hope!)

...