

NATIONAL RURAL HEALTH ALLIANCE INC

PUBLIC SEMINAR

'KEY ISSUES IN RURAL AND REMOTE HEALTH'

CANBERRA

FRIDAY, 20 OCTOBER 2006

CASE STUDIES IN PATIENTS' TRAVEL:

Pauline Venn, Breast Cancer Survivor, Rural Victoria

JOHN WAKERMAN: I will next introduce Pauline Venn. Pauline is a single mother who lives in the tiny rural town of Benambra in the north-east of Victoria in the high country there. She was diagnosed with breast cancer a couple of weeks prior to Christmas in 2004 and had subsequent surgery, chemotherapy and radiotherapy. The lack of access to treatment services in Gippsland meant that she was based on Melbourne, six hours from home, for that treatment, or that was the base for her treatment. She also has a son with autism spectrum disorder that needed to be considered as well as the breast cancer that she had and the journey she underwent.

Many avenues of accommodation she says were ruled out because of her need for family style accommodation and not being able to find housing for Pauline and her son meant additional stress to what was already an extremely stressful time.

Pauline is now on the BCNA Rural and Remote Working Party. She's a member of that together with other working party members from around Australia, and I'm sure we'll hear more about that. She works towards providing better treatment opportunities for women in rural and remote areas of Australia.