



Speech By  
**Hon. David Crisafulli**


**MEMBER FOR MUNDINGBURRA**

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Record of Proceedings, 27 November 2014

**MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

**Townsville Hospital**

 **Hon. DF CRISAFULLI** (Mundingburra—LNP) (Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience) (2.59 pm): By investing in our health system we have developed health care for the people of Townsville like we have never seen before. I do not just refer to things like the paediatric intensive care unit, which we promised and delivered; I ask people to judge the hardworking staff on their results. In the past 2½ years, the surgery long-wait lists have gone from 747 to zero. The dental waiting lists have gone from 2,207 to zero. I pay great respect to all of the hardworking staff and the local boards and the minister who has empowered them and increased funding to enable that to occur.

Now, we are embarking on a national first, with Australia's first on-time surgery guarantee. If you or your family needs surgery, you will get it within the recommended time frame or else be offered the next available appointment in a public or private hospital. These great results do not happen by themselves. They happen because of a record expenditure in Health, the performance of our local hospital and it is a direct reflection of the staff who work there.

On Tuesday, Townsville Hospital acknowledged its long-serving employees, with 584 staff being recognised for their five or more years of service. This commitment to their job is in no small way a reflection of the excellent results that our hospital is achieving. Some impressive records were held. They include people like Katrina Roberts, the nursing director of neonatal and paediatrics, who has clocked up an incredible 30 years of service, and Catherine Evans Goicoechea, who has been nursing at the hospital for 35 years.

Next week I am honoured to be attending the annual Townsville Hospital Foundation volunteers Christmas lunch, where around 90 of the volunteers will come together to celebrate another year of tireless dedication and service to our wider community. Those volunteers include people such as Karen Inch, one of my constituents, who will be recognised for an outstanding 30 years of service as a volunteer. Karen, who will also grace the pages of Townsville's *Duo* magazine next month in recognition of her efforts, started volunteering at the old Townsville Hospital at a time when the volunteers would not only assist patients and visitors but also cook cakes and biscuits. Karen works in the emergency department and is usually the first face that people will see when they arrive. She provides support to patients and their families during times of distress and uncertainty and also helps out the nursing staff when she can. She is a legend.

Then there are volunteers such as Carmela Marchiola and Susie Bayley, who between them have notched up more than 40 years of service. Both Carmela and Susie work on the foyer information desk, one of the busiest locations in the hospital, and the first point of call for passing traffic. From providing directions to helping elderly and disabled patients and showing people how to use the parking machine, these women are the face of Townsville Hospital. There is also Cristina

Martinez—one of my great old friends—who has been volunteering for the past 18 years. Of Spanish heritage, Cristina's role is referred to as an ethnic companion. She spends a lot of time with patients of Spanish heritage as well as working in the hospital's gift shop.

The times may have changed, but what has not is the unwavering commitment of our Townsville heroes to keeping our hospital on track. The hospital has shown huge improvements. There is so much more to be done in health, but I am proud to have the Townsville Hospital in my electorate. I am proud of the work of the staff and the volunteers.