



Speech By  
**Hon. Tim Nicholls**


**MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD**

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Record of Proceedings, 27 August 2014

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**Health Services, Funding**

 **Hon. TJ NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade) (2.14 pm): The Newman government was elected on a strong and unwavering promise to revitalise front-line services for Queensland families. When looking back at what we inherited, it is easy to remember why it was such an important pledge. In the area of health, we inherited a basket case. Nurses and doctors were being underpaid, overpaid or not paid at all. We had a fake Tahitian prince, who walked out the door with \$16 million in his kit, and a bureaucracy that got so out of control that Anna Bligh was forced to acknowledge its 'sick administrative performance'. Let us compare that with the fantastic results we are seeing under the leadership of the Premier and the Minister for Health. Queensland elective surgery waiting times have improved, ambulances arrive faster, our emergency departments are performing better and patient satisfaction has increased.

Far from the opposition and union cries of health cuts, this government has delivered record health budgets and these funding increases are delivering real outcomes. In the 2014-15 budget, Health funding increased by six per cent to \$13.6 billion, which was in addition to a 4.5 per cent increase in the 2013-14 budget. The Health budget is now more than \$2 billion larger than when the LNP came to government. In our first budget we made a strong commitment to reducing long-term waiting lists for Queensland patients. We have since reduced the public dental waiting list. Like the Premier I am amazed at these numbers: more than 62,000 people waited more than two years to see a dentist and now that figure is down to zero. We have cleared the waiting list for cochlear implants and we have a plan to clear the ophthalmology long-wait list by June next year. That is something that Labor could never and will never be able to accomplish. That budget also delivered a boost for rural and regional Queenslanders who need to travel to access health services, with a \$97.7 million commitment to double the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme. That was the first significant increase in more than a decade.

This government also wants our hardworking Health staff to have access to the best possible working conditions. That is why in the 2013-14 budget we pledged a total of \$327 million over four years to address another backlog of maintenance, this time the backlog inherited from the former government at Health facilities throughout the state. That budget also included \$80.8 million over four years to enable better access to healthcare services for Queenslanders in regional, rural and remote communities. The 2014-15 Health budget continued our commitment to improving health services for our regional communities with \$173.3 million for the redevelopment of hospitals in Cairns, Mackay, Mount Isa, Townsville and Rockhampton. That is on top of the \$224.5 million provided to the Lady Cilento Children's Hospital and almost \$369.8 million invested in the Sunshine Coast Public University Hospital. In 2014-15, 155 new and replacement ambulances will be commissioned and an extra 100 officers will be recruited.

We promised to revitalise front-line services and that is exactly what we are doing. We are making record investments in health and we are putting the emphasis back on front-line health delivery and not increased bureaucracy. That approach is producing real results. Only the LNP has a strong plan for a brighter future for all Queenslanders