




Speech By
Hon. Tim Nicholls

MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD

Record of Proceedings, 28 October 2014

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Strong Choices Future Investment Program

 **Hon. TJ NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade) (9.42 am): I have not yet embarked on a TreasuryQ document, but I feel one coming on, and an enlightening and exciting read it will be. The government promised to revitalise front-line services for Queensland families and we are delivering on that promise. When a family member needs medical attention, all Queenslanders deserve to know that they will have access to the best possible care as close to home as possible. Our regional hospitals play a vital role in the healthcare of hundreds of thousands of Queenslanders and this government has recognised their importance. The Deputy Premier has covered aspects of that in relation to his own area of Callide. When we came to government, we inherited a maintenance backlog in those hospitals. This government has pledged \$327 million over four years to address these issues. Whether it is upgrading the emergency lighting, fixing the air conditioning or repairing the roof, those jobs are now getting done. In fact, there are 2,000 maintenance jobs being carried out in our hospitals.

However, we know there is much more work to do to ensure all Queenslanders, no matter where they live, have access to quality health services. This is all part of a planned and methodical approach to providing the most effective and efficient health services across the state. Our Strong Choices plan to pay down debt and fund future infrastructure includes a \$300 million Community Hospitals Fund. This is an investment in upgrading and redeveloping hospitals in rural and regional areas to cater for the increasing demand for health services. We will not be repeating the mistakes of the past identified by the Auditor-General, who found that the former government's lack of planning in providing three new hospitals cost taxpayers \$2.2 billion more than expected.

This government understands that proper planning and evaluation is needed before embarking on major infrastructure projects. All potential projects identified as part of the Strong Choices Future Investment Program will be subject to rigorous analysis and project evaluation. We want to ensure that when Queenslanders in our regional and rural communities are faced with the uncertainty of illness or injury, they will have the comfort of knowing they have access to a properly planned and well maintained hospital, staffed by dedicated doctors and nurses. Only the LNP government has a plan to deliver those services to Queenslanders wherever they live.