




Speech By
Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk

MEMBER FOR INALA

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

National Close the Gap Day

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.40 am): Today is National Close the Gap Day. For all of us it is a call to action to improve the health outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. There is some good news to report. The national target to halve the gap in child mortality by 2018 is on track. There have been improvements in the proportion of Indigenous mothers attending antenatal care and reduced rates of smoking during pregnancy.

I am delighted that Brisbane is the first capital city in Australia to close the gap on year 12 attainment. Last year, more than 98 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the Brisbane metropolitan region successfully completed year 12. That compares with 94 per cent of non-Indigenous students. Last year for state high schools across Queensland, 94 per cent of Indigenous students achieved a year 12 certification compared to 95 per cent of non-Indigenous students. That is up from 86 per cent of Indigenous students the year before.

We are also working hard on closing the gap in employment outcomes. The Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative targets Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, while the Youth Employment Program supports Indigenous students who are completing year 12 with career, life and educational advice. We also remain committed to ensuring educational disparities are overcome. We have committed \$41.8 million over four years for children and family centres to provide integrated services to address the health and educational needs of young Indigenous children.

Queensland is a big state. We are fortunate to share this state with so many First Australians, but we have to recognise that there is much work to do when it comes to closing the gap. That work remains a key focus of my government.