




Speech By
Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk

MEMBER FOR INALA

Record of Proceedings, 11 October 2016

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Kowanyama

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.35 am): Last Friday, I was in North Queensland as reports came in of a tragedy unfolding in Kowanyama. Like all Queenslanders, I was saddened and horrified to hear that the woman who lost her life and another 25 people, who suffered horrific injuries, had been attending a funeral for another member of the community.

While this incident is subject to an ongoing police investigation, I want to acknowledge the grief, suffering and resilience of the Kowanyama community. On behalf of the government, I want to express my support for the community. I have spoken directly to the mayor, Michael Yam, to reaffirm our support.

The Treasurer in his capacity as Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and the member for Morayfield as assistant minister and ministerial champion for Kowanyama travelled to the community yesterday. I thank them for that. The Treasurer and the assistant minister relayed to me the community's gratitude for the quick and professional response from key agencies and that they wished to reassure other Queenslanders that the community is working together to support each other.

Additional officers from the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and the Department of Education and Training also travelled to Kowanyama yesterday to provide support for the community. I would also like to acknowledge the work of the local member for Cook and his representations on behalf of the community. I thank the Queensland Police Service for coordinating on-ground efforts with the council. I also thank the staff of the Royal Flying Doctor Service and Queensland Health for attending to the injured. Eleven people were treated in Kowanyama, while another 14 people were airlifted—10 to Cairns and the other four to Townsville. I am advised that five of those treated in Cairns have now been discharged. There is capacity to provide nursing staff to relieve those at the Kowanyama Primary Health Care Centre.

On behalf of the government and the people of Queensland, I wish those injured a full recovery and a safe return to Kowanyama. The injuries suffered are not all physical. There has been a significant impact on the emotional wellbeing of local residents. It will be essential for my government to continue to work with the community to ensure that its residents are supported in the weeks and months ahead.