




Speech By
Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk

MEMBER FOR INALA

Record of Proceedings, 9 November 2016

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Mer Island, Health Services

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (2.04 pm): My government is working hard to ensure that we have healthy and vibrant communities, even in the most remote regions in Queensland. In July, I was privileged to visit the Torres Strait with the Treasurer. It was my first visit to these remote islands. Both the people and the location make the Torres Strait one of the most beautiful places in the world.

During my three-day trip, I visited Mer Island—a small island in the eastern section of the Torres Strait. Mer Island is also home to the gravesite of the late Uncle Eddie Mabo and I will forever be grateful to the local elders for allowing me the opportunity to visit Uncle Eddie's grave and pay my respects. While on Mer Island, I also had the opportunity to speak with doctors and medical staff at the Mer Primary Health Care Centre. The centre supports the community through a visiting doctor service, nurses, Indigenous health workers and visiting primary healthcare programs. A nurse is on call there 24 hours a day. With the closest referral hospital located approximately 225 kilometres away, this team does an amazing job.

I promised the staff at the Mer Island clinic that I would speak to the Minister for Health and that I would get them the equipment that they need. I am pleased to advise that we are now delivering on that promise. With the assistance of the Minister for Health and his department, we have organised more than \$30,000 worth of upgraded health equipment for the centre. Just some of the equipment that Queensland Health has ordered and progressively shipped to Mer Island include a digital otoscope, which improves accurate diagnosis and treatment of ear infections; a new pharmacy fridge for the safe storage of vaccines; a pulse oximeter and paediatric sensor to ensure accurate monitoring of adults, infants and children; blood pressure monitoring equipment; and an exam light to ensure efficient light for fine clinical procedures. Anyone who has travelled to the Torres Strait knows the depth of the health challenges that the local people there face. I am pleased to say that this new equipment will help ensure that the Mer Primary Health Care Centre continues providing the best possible care to local residents.