



Speech By  
**Hon. Cameron Dick**


**MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE**

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Record of Proceedings, 16 March 2016

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS**

**Indigenous Paramedic Program**

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (2.21 pm): As the House will be aware, this week is Close the Gap Week. Our government is committed to improving the health outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders. I am pleased to inform the House that Queensland Health is working hard across the department and through hospital and health services, as well as within the Queensland Ambulance Service, to close the health gap in Queensland.

Today I met with 17 Indigenous paramedics who are stationed throughout regional and remote Queensland. They are stationed in towns including Cairns, Woorabinda, Doomadgee, Mount Isa, Palm Island, Bundaberg and Thursday Island. Each of the paramedics has completed their training under the specialised Indigenous Paramedic Program which is designed to increase the number of Indigenous people employed by the Queensland Ambulance Service. It was inspirational to meet these very impressive cadets. The vast majority are from small remote communities to which they will return after their training. This program will create jobs in communities where jobs are often at a premium. Having met many of these cadets, I am confident that they will provide excellent role models in these smaller and remote communities.

This program is bridging the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, both within the Queensland Ambulance Service and in the broader community, by building a closer relationship and understanding between the service and the Queensland communities it serves. Two of the newest recruits will be stationed at Ravenshoe on the Atherton Tablelands. I know that the Ravenshoe community has been calling for extra paramedics, especially in the wake of the terrible explosion in the town last year when two people died. I am proud to be able to deliver this for them. These recruits will strengthen community engagement and improve service delivery by contributing local knowledge and cultural understanding. I congratulate the Indigenous paramedics on their appointments to the program and wish them all the best for their future careers.