




Speech By
Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Budget, Ambulance Service; Gold Coast Health, Staff Innovation Competition

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (9.44 am): Our government greatly values the work of the Queensland Ambulance Service. The 2016 state budget supports the men and women of the QAS. Put simply, the state budget provides more ambulances, more ambulance officers and new and renovated ambulance stations for Queensland. The operating budget of the QAS has increased by 6.3 per cent to \$673 million—up by \$40 million from last year. This increase will allow us to employ more people. The budget allows for the employment of up to 110 extra ambulance officers around the state. The capital works budget of the QAS has increased by 31.5 per cent to \$59.7 million, an increase of \$14.3 million over last year. This increase will allow for 170 new and replacement ambulances which will be part of a rolling vehicle replacement program to ensure quality front-line services. The QAS budget also provides \$15.9 million to deliver new and replacement ambulance stations at Collinsville, Rainbow Beach, Yandina, Bundaberg, Birtinya, Kenilworth, Coral Gardens, Wynnum and Thursday Island.

On another matter, I was privileged to recently act as a judge in Gold Coast Health's staff innovation competition, the Improvers. The Improvers is a wonderful Gold Coast event where staff compete for a share of up to \$280,000 in funding to turn their bright ideas for improving patient care and service delivery into reality. I was also moved to grant a special ministerial award to several finalists to ensure their projects are realised. This included a vision by Gold Coast Health's community palliative care team to purchase four beach wheelchairs to enable people living with a terminal illness to once again experience the joy of visiting the beach with their loved ones.

I am pleased to say that one of those beach wheelchairs has already arrived on the Gold Coast and today Tony Lambert, whom I met at the Improvers and who has motor neurone disease, will receive his wish of once again feeling the ocean on his skin when he becomes the first palliative care patient to benefit from this great idea. I understand Tony is due in the surf at 11 o'clock and I wish him well and I thank those staff who have made this happen for Tony and for others like him. This is the Queensland health system at its best—staff thinking about how to provide the best possible services to patients. We are a government which strongly supports its staff and the ideas they have to improve health care in Queensland.