




Speech By
Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Kowanyama

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (10.02 am): I join the Premier in expressing my condolences to the community and the families affected by the terrible incident in Kowanyama. I am pleased to report to the House that our state's health system rose to the challenge of responding to this terrible incident.

In an hour of need and in the hours following health services from across the state united in a way that can only be described as outstanding. I wish to formally acknowledge: the Royal Flying Doctor Service; the Apunimpima Cape York Health Council; Lifeflight; the Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Service; the Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service; the Townsville Hospital and Health Service; and the countless nursing and medical staff, counsellors and volunteers. These groups rushed to the aid of Kowanyama and they gave their all. A total of 14 patients in all were airlifted out of Kowanyama—10 to the Cairns Hospital and four to the Townsville Hospital. It took the system a matter of hours to clear 14 seriously injured patients from one of the most remote communities in the cape.

Amid the chaos, numerous names of those working behind the scenes have emerged and are worthy of mention. I would like to acknowledge some of those today. They are: the Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Service Chair, Mr Bob McCarthy; the Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service Acting Chief Executive, Clare Douglas; and the Townsville Hospital and Health Service Chief Executive, Dr Peter Bristow, and Chair, Mr Tony Mooney. I also wish to acknowledge the Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Service emergency response team: Mr Michel Lok, the health service Chief Executive; Lyn Wardlaw, the Executive Director Nursing and Midwifery; and Dr Kate McConnon, the executive director of medicine. Mr Josh Stafford, the Remote Director of Nursing, southern sector, flew to Kowanyama in the early afternoon on Friday to help coordinate the response.

I also acknowledge: the Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Service nursing staff; the Pomppuraaw nursing team; the RFDS flight staff and medical officers; the QAS field officer living in Kowanyama, Ms Mellissa Keune, whose response as an individual clinician was outstanding; the Weipa health service; the Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service and the Townsville Hospital and Health Service doctors, nurses and other medical teams; and all those who helped where they could. In the days and weeks to come, as the community works towards recovery from this tragic event, Queensland Health will continue to assist and support the community in any way it can.