



Speech By
Hon. Shannon Fentiman

MEMBER FOR WATERFORD

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Indigenous Wellbeing Centres

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (10.07 am): The Palaszczuk government is committed to implementing the reforms of the 2013 Child Protection Commission of Inquiry. We are walking the talk when it comes to making our child protection system in Queensland as strong as it can be. We are rebuilding the department of child safety, hiring an additional 227 child safety workers and we have delivered a record investment in early intervention services for vulnerable families.

I am also proud to announce to this House today that we are creating 38 new regional jobs for Queenslanders with the delivery of our first four Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Wellbeing services. They are rolling out from today to deliver culturally responsive and community-led support for Queenslanders to safely care for their children at home. In the South Burnett we anticipate five new full-time jobs to help deliver services through the Cherbourg Regional Aboriginal and Islander Community Controlled Health Services. In Mackay we anticipate 7.5 new full-time jobs to help deliver services through the Girulda Community Cooperative Society. In Roma we anticipate another 7.5 full-time jobs to help deliver services for the south-west, including for the surrounding communities of Charleville, St George and Cunnamulla. In Moreton Bay we anticipate 18 new full-time jobs to deliver services for families through the Institute of Urban Indigenous Health.

This is just the start of the delivery of 20 new Indigenous wellbeing centres for Queenslanders, worth \$150 million, to better support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities. These vital community controlled organisations will put Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the driver's seat when it comes to making critical decisions around the safety of children and the health of families. This is part of a broader suite of reforms aimed at reducing the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families in the child protection system.

By 2018, we hope to have our Indigenous wellbeing centres delivering help and advice to more than 6,000 Queensland families. A fortnight ago I joined Matthew Cooke and Aunty Lizzie from the Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council to announce the roll-out of our groundbreaking new First 1000 Days program at Townsville and Moreton Bay. This is an exciting and innovative new program to focus health support on young children from preconception to age two. We are partnering with the University of Melbourne to bring it to fruition.

Today's announcement is just another example of the Palaszczuk government partnering with our community leaders and stakeholders to deliver services that build family and community capacity. With communities and families at the centre of our innovative approach to addressing past injustices caused by harmful government practices, we are driving real and lasting change. This is the kind of change we need to keep our kids safe and our community healthy.