



Speech By  
**Hon. Cameron Dick**


**MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE**

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## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

### **Queensland Health**

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (10.14 am): The last two years have been a period of significant achievement in Queensland Health, where prudent and judicious management has allowed us to deliver falling waiting lists and a financial surplus across the system while meeting the challenges of rising demand. Last year, I launched our government's \$361 million Specialist Outpatient Strategy. When we came to office, there were over 100,000 Queenslanders waiting longer than clinically recommended for a specialist outpatient appointment. I am delighted to say that, today, that number is under 60,000—an improvement of over 40 per cent. It should never be forgotten that those 100,000 Queenslanders were left behind by the LNP. I acknowledge that having more people access specialist appointments increases pressure on our elective surgery theatres. It is a significant achievement that these lists have remained stable, that we are continuing to meet our budget performance targets for elective surgery and that, at 29 days, we continue to lead the country in median waiting times.

I have long held the belief that, if you want to improve health outcomes, you invest in the front line of health care. That is why the Palaszczuk government has legislated nurse-to-patient ratios in our public hospitals. That is why the Palaszczuk government increased the number of nurses and midwives by over 3,000 on a full-time-equivalent basis. Earlier this month, I announced a record intake of over 1,100 new nurses and midwives, who will begin their careers in nursing and midwifery in the coming weeks as part of our 2017 graduate intake.

We are enhancing the patient and staff experience with new or refurbished clinics throughout Queensland through our \$1.4 billion capital works program. I salute the team that has worked so hard on getting the Sunshine Coast university hospital ready to start receiving patients as early as next month. That team has had an absolute commitment to patient safety in commissioning that hospital—a team that is determined to learn the lessons from the botched opening of the Lady Cilento Children's Hospital, part of the legacy of Campbell Newman and the Leader of the Opposition.

In December, I launched Australia's first Sexual Health Strategy. The strategy includes \$5.3 million to support key priority areas. Today, I announce that that funding will be used to support better education, syphilis surveillance and psychological services. Funding will go to important initiatives such as enhancing the Metro North Hospital and Health Service's syphilis surveillance program and enhancing the availability of sexual health testing in places such as the Gold Coast, Townsville and the Wide Bay. This is an important investment after the cuts to Indigenous sexual health services implemented by the Newman government, which coincided with a rise in notifications of sexually transmissible infections.

It is widely understood that Health is a portfolio that never rests. I am under no illusion about the challenges that lie ahead, particularly in the context of the Turnbull coalition government's determination to walk away from its responsibility to contribute its fair share of funding to Queensland's public health

system. However, I can affirm that the Palaszczuk Labor government is determined to build on what it has achieved over the past two years as it continues to work towards its goal of making Queenslanders among the healthiest people in the world by 2026.