



Speech By  
**Hon. Cameron Dick**


**MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE**

---

Record of Proceedings, 22 March 2017

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**National Close the Gap Day**

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (2.25 pm): Thursday, 16 March 2017 was National Close the Gap Day. To coincide with this, Queensland Health's *Closing the gap: performance report 2016* was released last week. This annual report monitors the progress in closing the life expectancy and child mortality gaps between Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Indigenous Queenslanders. The report shows that Queensland continues to make progress in improving health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders against a range of health measures, but much more needs to be done.

Between 2005 and 2012, Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander life expectancy increased by 1.6 years for males and 1.7 years for females. In the decade between 2005 and 2015, mortality rates decreased by 18.8 per cent for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged from birth to four years. These are welcome improvements but, sadly, are still below that of non-Indigenous Australians. That is why the Palaszczuk government has committed more than \$200 million over three years from 2015-2018 to further reduce these gaps through services and programs aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of Indigenous Queenslanders.

This morning I was pleased to officially open the new Birthing in Our Community Mums and Bubs Hub in Salisbury. This service, a partnership involving the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service Brisbane and Mater Health Services will help Indigenous women throughout their pregnancy. The hub will provide continuity of care through pregnancy, birth and labour care, up to six weeks postnatal care, birthing support, the Stop Smoking in its Tracks incentive program, perinatal mental health, breastfeeding support and family support services.

We know this program is getting results, which is why Queensland Health will provide \$3 million over two years to support the clinic. Research shows 97.8 per cent of the women supported by the Birthing in Our Communities program had five or more antenatal visits and only four per cent have birthed at low baby weight. The new hub will see 200 women—double the number that are currently in the program. These are just some of the examples of the Palaszczuk government's commitment to improving health care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders. While there is still a long way to go, by working in partnership with Indigenous Queenslanders we are making progress both in addressing health inequality and closing the gap in Queensland.