




Speech By
Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Health Services

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (9.52 am): Last year the Palaszczuk government launched *My health, Queensland's future: advancing health 2026*. At its heart is the Palaszczuk government's aim to make Queenslanders amongst the healthiest people in the world by 2026. Since coming to government we have increased funding by 12 per cent to our state's health system to ensure our hospitals can cope with increasing demand. This money has gone into restoring front-line health services cut by the previous LNP government.

Over the last two years we have employed an additional 4,000 nurses and 1,300 doctors to deliver the health services Queenslanders expect. We have just celebrated the first anniversary of our groundbreaking nurse-to-patient ratio legislation which will improve patient care. We are employing 400 nurse navigators over four years to help patients with complex health conditions navigate their way through the health system and ensure they are connected to the right services.

This investment in our front-line services is paying dividends. When we came to government there were more than 104,000 Queenslanders who had waited longer than clinically recommended for an appointment with a specialist. With the introduction of our specialist outpatient strategy, that number is now down to just over 50,000—a reduction of 52 per cent.

I am also pleased the latest data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare shows that Queensland has the shortest median waiting time for elective surgery in the country. The median waiting time for elective surgery in Queensland is 29 days compared to a national waiting time of 37 days. Without the dedicated commitment of our front-line staff and the investment needed to back this up, these achievements would not have been possible.

We have introduced the most progressive medicinal cannabis laws in the country. We have successfully overseen the safe opening of the Sunshine Coast University Hospital—the first new, not replacement, tertiary hospital built in Australia in the last 20 years. Later today I will be introducing into the parliament a bill to establish the Healthy Futures Commission to help tackle Queensland's high obesity and chronic disease rates by supporting children, young people and families to adopt a healthy lifestyle.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members, you will have an opportunity to debate it when it comes into the House at the appropriate time. You will not debate it now.

Mr DICK: While members opposite interject and criticise the proposal, I am very delighted to report to the parliament that this initiative has been welcomed by Diabetes Queensland, the Heart Foundation and the Urban Indigenous Health Institute. This initiative, together with all of our investment in health, is evidence of the Palaszczuk government's commitment to delivering on our goal of making Queenslanders amongst the healthiest people in the world by 2026.