




Speech By
Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE

Record of Proceedings, 15 June 2017

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Budget, Queensland Ambulance Service

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (9.55 am): I have often spoken in this House about the importance of our front-line health staff and the investment the Palaszczuk government has made to restore front-line services cut by the previous Newman LNP government. Today I want to pay tribute to those health workers who serve resolutely on the front line, who take health care directly to the community, who frequently provide the first point of contact and the first phase of treatment to Queenslanders at points in their life when they are often vulnerable, almost always anxious and, regrettably, occasionally aggressive. I speak of the hardworking men and women of the Queensland Ambulance Service.

The 2017-18 budget continues this government's record of delivery to the QAS to ensure Queenslanders have access to life-saving care where and when they need it. The QAS has an operating budget this year of \$719.6 million—an increase of \$46.6 million, or 6.9 per cent, and \$125 million more than the allocation in the final budget of the now Leader of the Opposition when he was treasurer in the Newman government.

The QAS will have a capital budget of \$54.6 million in 2017-18—an increase of almost 32 per cent on the allocation provided under the last Newman LNP government. This funding will support the critical work our ambulance officers do in our community by continuing to deliver the necessary staffing and facilities they need to help Queenslanders in need. That includes in 2017 the recruitment of 75 additional ambulance staff to provide enhanced roster coverage to manage increasing demand for ambulance services.

We will be commissioning 150 new and replacement ambulance vehicles and continuing the rollout of new power assisted stretchers. The Palaszczuk government is also investing \$16.9 million in planning or delivering new and replacement ambulance stations at Birtinya on the Sunshine Coast, Bundaberg, Kenilworth, Thursday Island, Coral Gardens on the Gold Coast, Wynnum, Rockhampton, Hervey Bay, Drayton, Cairns and Kirwan in Townsville.

Our government is delivering for all Queenslanders, regardless of where they live. Like other areas in our health system, our ambulance services are facing the ongoing challenge of rising demand. In the past year our ambulances were called to respond on 1.1 million occasions—an increase of 164,000 call-outs under the Newman LNP government. Despite this unprecedented demand surge, our communications staff are answering over 90 per cent of all triple 0 calls within 10 seconds. According to the Productivity Commission's Report on Government Services, QAS response times in Queensland are the third best in the country—an extraordinary achievement for a state of our geographical size and the dispersed nature of our population.

The 2017 state budget continues the Palaszczuk government's commitment to deliver high-quality front-line health services to Queenslanders, including by supporting our professional and hardworking Queensland Ambulance Service staff.