




Speech By
Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Flu Summit

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (9.54 am): Queenslanders have endured one of the worst flu seasons in many years—one that has made a contribution to the record books. More than 50,000 influenza notifications have been reported across the state this year, almost double the number in previous years. The significant increase of flu cases has led to higher levels of demand on the public health system and placed more pressure on our hospitals and emergency departments. Queensland hospitals have experienced a higher rate of admissions than usual, with more than 5,400 public hospital admissions across the state for influenza. Almost 650 of those admissions received intensive care. On 14 August this year the Queensland Ambulance Service set a new record for the number of calls for assistance, with 3,882 responses on a single day.

Many take it for granted that our health system can manage these spikes in demand, but I do not. Our hardworking paramedics, clinicians and support staff have done a great job this winter. Our front-line staff are well aware of the commitment of the Palaszczuk government to support front-line services—in the same way they remember the ‘cut, sack and sell’ mentality of the Leader of the Opposition.

Because the number of cases of influenza and its impact on the Queensland health system was so much higher than in recent years, we need to review the impact the flu has had on our health system as we start preparing for the impact flu might have on Queensland in 2018. Accordingly, I have asked Queensland Health to convene a flu summit in Brisbane next week. The summit will bring together the knowledge and expertise from within our state’s health system as well as leading national and international perspectives in the field, like Monash University and the World Health Organization. The aim of the summit is to better understand the spike in flu cases this year and find ways to ensure Queensland is well placed to do what we can to prepare for next year and future flu seasons. The summit will help us prepare for next year’s flu season and help achieve our vision, which is to make Queenslanders amongst the healthiest people in the world by 2026.