



Speech By  
**Cynthia Lui**


**MEMBER FOR COOK**

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Record of Proceedings, 17 May 2018

**PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT**

**Mareeba Hospital**

 **Ms LUI** (Cook—ALP) (2.27 pm): I rise to speak of the wonderful things that are happening in my electorate. On 24 April I attended a sod-turning ceremony for staff accommodation at the Mareeba Hospital, along with the chair of the Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service, Mr Clive Skarrot, CEO Ms Clare Douglas, the wonderful Mareeba Hospital staff and local members of the community. In October 2017 the Palaszczuk government committed \$1.5 million to building new staff accommodation in Mareeba. In December 2017 the Minister for Health, Minister Miles, visited Mareeba Hospital and met with health executives, health staff and community groups to discuss the Palaszczuk government's commitment and support to the local community through building much needed infrastructure.

As the member for Cook, it was an honour and privilege to take part in this special ceremony to witness the beginning of an important investment of infrastructure into the community. As someone who has given many years to working in the health sector in a remote community in the Torres Strait, I understand how important it is to support health services in regional and remote communities because, without the right support in place to retain staff, we will continue to lose staff to better opportunities in other areas.

The recently developed rural and remote workforce strategy for Queensland identified staff accommodation as one of the critical aspects in the recruitment and retention of a workforce in rural and remote areas. The provision of appropriate staff accommodation in rural and remote areas is a vital part of delivering local health services, and this \$1.5 million investment will assist in attracting and retaining staff to Mareeba Hospital into the future. I fully support the construction of new staff accommodation because of the opportunities it will create. This construction will begin in just two short months. I look forward to seeing three new staff houses that will be suitable for either families or single staff.

The Palaszczuk government continues to invest in Mareeba Hospital and in the Mareeba community. Since 2015 funding to Mareeba Hospital has increased by 14 per cent and staffing has increased by 10 per cent, to 186 full-time-equivalent staff. The number of doctors at Mareeba Hospital has almost doubled since 2014. Mareeba is a growing and vibrant community with a lot of potential for future growth and development. It is equally important that we put the right infrastructure in place to support future growth in the region.