




Speech By  
**Hon. Dr Steven Miles**  
**MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA**

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Record of Proceedings, 13 June 2018

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

### Budget, Health

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (9.52 am): Over these last six months I have done my best to visit as many hospitals and health sites as I can. I have now been to 15 of the 16 HHSs, with one left to go. What has struck me about our regional health staff is their absolute and unwavering dedication to their care of patients. They really do amazing work.

The Palaszczuk government takes health care in this state very seriously. We made health a priority from the moment we came to government in 2015. Yesterday's budget invests more in health services in rural and remote areas. For instance, there is funding of \$17.5 million to increase podiatry services to drive down the 70 per cent of hospitalisations and amputations that could be avoided with early intervention, and we are developing an allied health rural generalist pathway, which includes podiatry, to be offered by James Cook University and QUT.

Queensland is pioneering medical rural generalism. In the past year four other jurisdictions have used our model to roll out more training positions. Then there is the Rural Doctors Upskilling Program, which is providing greater access to training within the public sector for general practitioners and rural generalists. The Palaszczuk government will also invest \$20 million over the next four years to enhance renal services in North Queensland. The department is working with Townsville, Mackay, North-West, Cairns and Hinterland, and Torres and Cape HHSs to deliver expanded renal services closer to home for people in those areas.

Providing free universal health care in a state like Queensland is not easy. More than 50 per cent of our population lives outside our metropolitan areas. There are parts of our population, like those in the Torres Strait, who actually live closer to other countries than they do to a tertiary hospital. Despite the demand challenges, a record number of people are receiving treatment within clinically recommended times in Queensland.

Our regional doctors and nurses work tirelessly, so we need to make sure that it is in the best environment possible. That is why we are upgrading staff accommodation around the state. That includes Clermont, Aurukun, Bamaga, Kowanyama, Mornington Island, Mareeba, Hughenden and Richmond staff accommodations.

I want to thank our regional doctors, nurses, midwives and health professionals and their support staff for the amazing work they do and reaffirm our commitment to delivering excellent health care in the regions.