



Speech By  
**Hon. Dr Steven Miles**


**MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA**

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Record of Proceedings, 31 October 2018

## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS**

### **Cape York Peninsula and Torres Strait, Health Services**

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (9.51 am): The Palaszczuk government is determined to ensure that Queenslanders get the best health care, no matter where they live. Last week I travelled to Cape York Peninsula and the Torres Strait to see firsthand how vital health and ambulance services are delivered to some of our most remote and isolated communities.

At Cooktown, over lunch I had a great chat with aged-care residents at the Multipurpose Health Centre. I also met Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health worker Anna Cleary from Wujal Wujal Primary Health Centre, south of Cooktown. Anna is one of Queensland Health's first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners. We will be deploying ATSI health practitioners just like Anna across North Queensland to improve the delivery of accessible and culturally safe medical care to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

From Cooktown we drove north to visit the Hope Vale Primary Health Care Centre and meet staff and local community leaders. In Weipa, I chatted to patient Christine Jacobs while she had chemotherapy right there in her local hospital, close to home, supported by local nursing staff and linked by video to specialist cancer care staff at Cairns Hospital.

On Masig and Saibai islands in the Torres Strait, I visited the health clinics and talked to staff and elders. From Saibai you can literally see PNG, exposing locals to diseases such as polio, TB and leprosy. On Thursday Island I met our hardworking ambulance officers and helped open their new \$2.8 million station. I visited with dialysis patients at the Thursday Island Hospital. If you have to have dialysis anywhere, that is the place to do it, overlooking the crystal-clear waters.

Throughout my journey I was impressed by the dedication, commitment and enthusiasm exhibited by all Queensland Health and Queensland Ambulance Service staff in the delivery of their services. Truly, they are our single greatest asset.

I also thank the member for Cook for travelling with me. There was not a single place we went where the locals did not hug and kiss her, and tell her what a good job she is doing for them. That is quite a feat considering that on just one of the days we flew in two planes for three hours, from Weipa to Masig, and still had not left her electorate. Queensland is a great big state, but from the New South Wales border all the way to Saibai Island we are blessed with fantastic public health staff.