




Speech By
Michael Healy

MEMBER FOR CAIRNS

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service

 **Mr HEALY** (Cairns—ALP) (2.09 pm): The Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service provides an extensive range of health services at more than 30 regional, remote and rural facilities across a geographical area of 143,900 square kilometres, ranging from Cairns to Tully in the south, Cow Bay in the north and Croydon in the west. This area includes some of the most remote communities in Queensland. Each of these communities has its own identity and history and its own needs. These communities experience a range of chronic and complex conditions. This means that it needs to maintain an appropriate balance between providing local access to services and centralising services to ensure their quality and, more importantly, their sustainability.

The majority of inpatient activity in the Cairns and hinterland area is undertaken at Cairns Hospital, which is growing, as we all know, at a very fast rate. Largely, this has been made possible by the \$454 million redevelopment undertaken by the Bligh Labor government in 2015. That is why I was pleased to be at the Cairns Base Hospital last month to welcome 51 junior doctors for the next stage of their medical careers. The 51 junior doctors, who are from Queensland and other parts of Australia as well as some from overseas, are part of a statewide intake of 780 recent graduates. By now they would be halfway through their first of five rotations across a variety of specialised areas which may include general medicine, surgery, orthopaedics, oncology, paediatrics and emergency services. This will give them exposure to as many clinical areas as possible to help them decide where they may wish to specialise. Reflecting the Palaszczuk government's strong commitment to growing our regional health services, this year we have six more junior doctors than last year, increasing our role as a training hospital and potentially expanding our supply of future doctors who want to work and live in the Tropical North. We are the only location in Queensland offering a placement with the Royal Flying Doctor Service, which is a unique opportunity for some of these junior doctors.

The junior doctor program has been very successful since it was first introduced into the health service in 1998, with a majority of interns actually staying after their first 12 months. In addition to this, we also welcome 102 new nursing and midwifery graduates as they kickstart their careers over the coming weeks. Our health service is without any doubt an excellent training ground for junior doctors and nurses, and I know their contribution to our community will be immediately felt whilst they embark on what I am sure will be long and very rewarding careers.

It is also important to mention that the Cairns emergency department has been in the media a fair bit recently. We have seen a significant increase in investment by the state government recently to the tune of over \$2 million to ensure that this very important facility at the Cairns Hospital is well resourced and the people running the hospital have the appropriate funds.