




Speech By
Hon. Dr Steven Miles
MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Townsville, Health Services; Member for Pine Rivers

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (10.00 am): The great city of Townsville is booming. Their population is set to increase by about 30,000 people over the next 10 years and with that they need a healthcare service that is world-class and that will keep up with demand. The Palaszczuk government delivered a record budget for the Townsville Hospital and Health Service this financial year: \$983 million, a \$50 million increase on the previous year. We are delivering a second MRI, more funds for the new paediatric ward, more services and more staff.

In January of last year, federal Labor committed to building a new 33-bed ward at the Townsville Hospital. A Shorten Labor government will invest \$13 million to build the ward, which will provide state-of-the-art care to cancer and cardiovascular disease patients, general medicine patients and general surgery patients. It will mean more North Queenslanders can get the care they need closer to home. The ward will be established in an existing shell space on the hospital grounds with the fit-out expected to take about 18 months.

We know Townsville is booming, federal Labor knows Townsville is booming but look who has finally come to the party. Just last week the federal government finally committed to matching federal Labor's commitment of a 33-bed ward at the Townsville Hospital. But—there is a but—in the budget on Tuesday night we found out that in the imaginary scenario where they are re-elected, those funds from the Morrison government will not be delivered until 2022-23.

Mr Dick: Onwards.

Dr MILES: In the onwards—past the forwards, in the onwards. The people of Townsville need this ward underway now, not kicked down the road. The people of Townsville need the federal government to reverse its cut to hospital funding—over \$20 million was cut from the Townsville HHS. That is 178 hip replacements or 325 knee surgeries. This affects the people of Townsville in a very real way.

It is clear that the federal government does not have a clue when it comes to North Queensland and what people in the north need. A Shorten Labor government has committed to this funding in its first budget. Only a Shorten Labor government will deliver better health care for Queenslanders no matter where they live.

Mr Speaker, while I am on my feet, I hope you will allow me on behalf of all members of the House to congratulate my good friend the member for Pine Rivers. She and her partner, Reece, welcomed a little baby girl yesterday afternoon and I understand they are all doing well.