




Speech By
Hon. Dr Steven Miles

MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Budget, Health and Ambulance Services

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (10.01 am): Our ambos have had a difficult time lately in responding to a run of horrific road accidents. Last week, at Caboolture Hospital, I met with the paramedics who were first on the scene to that horrible fatal crash in Rothwell. I thanked them on behalf of all of us. Our ambos are there for us on the worst days of our lives. Those worst days of our lives are every working day of their lives.

Yesterday, I was proud to announce that the Queensland Ambulance Service budget would receive an \$85.4 million boost, bringing its 2019-20 budget to \$885.7 million—a 10.7 per cent increase on last year's QAS budget. That includes budget funding for 200 more paramedics. The budget also includes funding for 122 new and replacement ambulance vehicles with power lift stretchers so that our officers have the best equipment to respond to emergencies.

We are building more and better ambulance stations right across the state. We will invest \$55.7 million in capital infrastructure to build new stations and upgrade existing ones. An allocation of \$10 million of that funding will go towards the construction and planning phases of ambulance stations in our regions—at Urraween and Drayton. In Yarrabilba—and I know this will be welcomed by the member for Logan—we will also plan and construct a new station. I know that the member for Thuringowa is very pleased to see funds to replace Kirwan station, where he himself served. The member for Cook has secured a replacement station at Mareeba. Members representing the Cairns area will see the redevelopment of the Cairns Ambulance Station and Operations Centre and we will refurbish the Rockhampton ambulance station. On the Gold Coast, we will refurbish the operations centre as well as the Southport Ambulance Station. Our hardworking QAS staff do a tremendous job looking after Queenslanders. This budget shows the Palaszczuk government's commitment to them.

On an average day, our hardworking doctors and nurses provide inpatient care to more than 10,700 patients. They provide specialist outpatient services to more than 12,600 people and they provide emergency care to over 5,500 people. To meet this ever-growing demand, the Health budget is up 6.6 per cent on last year's budget. Importantly, this increased funding will also bolster our efforts to keep reducing waiting lists, with another \$77.4 million for the specialist outpatient long wait strategy, which will deliver an extra 120,000 appointments and 13,000 elective surgery procedures. This strategy has been hugely successful in cutting the backlog of patients waiting for outpatient appointments from 104,000 under the LNP despite big increases in demand from patients.