




Speech By
Hon. Dr Steven Miles

MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Rural Queensland, Maternity Services

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (9.52 am): I was pleased to announce on Sunday that Theodore, Weipa and Cloncurry will be target sites for maternity planning. I am pleased to announce today that the new Office of Rural Health and new workforce arrangements will mean almost all public health employees will work for Queensland Health. Together, these initiatives will mean that our rural health workforce will have more opportunities than ever before.

I want to thank again the Rural Maternity Taskforce for their work on giving women in the bush more options for birthing safely closer to home. Their maternity planning tool is a guide that helps hospital and health services assess existing maternity services and, when necessary, modify them or introduce new services. We are also investing \$500,000 to enable midwives and physicians at rural hospitals to rotate through larger hospitals for training purposes.

Our clinicians do a great job in providing care to women and families not only in birthing but also in the critical areas of antenatal and postnatal care. I visited the birth suite at Mount Isa Base Hospital last week, and the clinicians on the ground there are doing amazing things. Andrea, an outreach midwife, travels to remote areas like Doomadgee and Mornington Island to do pregnancy check-ups. Then when the women travel to Mount Isa to give birth, she is there with them. Andrea's secret weapon for keeping mums engaged and going to their appointments is a simple camera. She started doing maternity photography in exchange for a commitment to five appointments. It is a beautiful take-home gift for the families and a great incentive to make appointments. Now Andrea's beautiful photographs have been featured in *Marie Claire* magazine.

Investing early in the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies, their mothers and families is one of the best ways to improve health outcomes throughout life. We recently launched the first ever maternity strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Queensland. As part of this, Queensland Health is partnering with Griffith University to support a sustainable pathway for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander midwifery workforce in Queensland, and we will invest \$50,000 this year to support second-year midwifery students to complete their study. Queensland is one of the safest places in the world to give birth, no matter where you live, and we are doing all we can to improve maternity services even more.