




Speech By
Michael Healy

MEMBER FOR CAIRNS

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ADJOURNMENT

Cairns Hospital, Upgrade

 **Mr HEALY** (Cairns—ALP) (7.09 pm): As most honourable members of the House would be aware, the Premier and cabinet travelled to Cairns last week for a cabinet meeting. I know ministers were out and about meeting with various groups and inspecting a wide range of projects currently underway which are funded by this government. In particular today I want to talk about the announcements by the Premier in relation to the Cairns Hospital. The first is the \$51.4 million of upgrades at the hospital which include: a \$26.4 million expansion of the Cairns Hospital emergency department, which has been needed for quite some time; a \$1.5 million project to turn a currently unused space into a multidisciplinary pre-admission clinic; a \$2 million commitment to add a new endoscopy room; a \$800,000 project to fit out a much needed 12th operating theatre; and a \$20.7 million commitment to crucial upgrades at the hospital which will cater for projected future demand. Not only will these improvements deliver world-class health facilities for our region, but this investment will support further construction jobs which is crucial for our economic recovery.

The Cairns emergency department sees more than 74,000 presentations in a year and this number continues to grow. The Cairns Hospital is on par with other emergency departments in South-East Queensland, such as the Princess Alexandra Hospital and the Sunshine Coast University Hospital. The \$26.4 million expansion of the Cairns Hospital emergency department is particularly welcome. I have spoken on a number of occasions to doctors and nurses and inspected firsthand what is required down there. I know that Dr Lambros Halkidis and his fellow colleagues were very pleased with the news when the Premier announced it last week. This project will build on infrastructure projects already underway which include \$70 million going into a new three-storey, state-of-the-art 53-bed acute care mental health facility; \$4.5 million for refurbishment of the Cairns Hospital to create an 11-bed ward; and \$3.7 million for a hybrid theatre for vascular surgery and cardiac imaging.

The other exciting announcement at the Cairns Hospital is that the Palaszczuk government will put Cairns on the health map as a tertiary hospital by seeking a memorandum of understanding with James Cook University to transition to a university hospital. That has been a goal and it has been something that we as a community have got behind. We are very keen to see this proceed. We are very pleased also with the announcement by the Premier. As we unite and recover from COVID-19, we are investing in essential infrastructure that is very much needed, in addition to supporting local jobs and helping jump-start the economy which has been impacted globally.

(Time expired)