



Speech By  
**Cynthia Lui**


**MEMBER FOR COOK**

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## **MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

### **Rural and Remote Queensland, Health Services**

 **Ms LUI** (Cook—ALP) (2.20 pm): Remoteness is one of the many contributing factors affecting social and economic outcomes for communities from Cape York to the Torres Strait Islands. When it comes to health, research clearly shows that locality plays a big part in determining health outcomes for people in rural and remote areas. On 1 March I had the pleasure of visiting the Weipa Integrated Health Service in western Cape York and was shown around the health service by the director of nursing and midwifery, Kindee Lawty, and senior medical officer William Horwood to inspect works that are currently underway, meet staff and hear about the wonderful service being delivered in the community. The Weipa Integrated Health Service was officially opened on 30 April 2009 by then Labor member for Cook Jason O'Brien. Coming across this plaque was a wonderful reminder of the good work of all Labor governments and is evidence that Labor is committed to delivering vital services and infrastructure to all people, no matter where they live. Whether we are in 2009 or 2021, Labor governments deliver.

I met John, a young man in his late 20s from Mapoon receiving his renal dialysis treatment at Weipa Hospital. John tells me that he travels an hour each way on the unsealed road between Mapoon and Weipa three times a week to receive his dialysis treatment. John told me that he has three young children, a partner and a beautiful home in Mapoon and is very grateful to be receiving treatment closer to home and not having to sacrifice the life he has built to move to Cairns. My visit to the Weipa Integrated Health Service comes almost 12 years after the official opening of that facility. It was wonderful to visit last week to inspect this state government's investment in the health service for the benefit of all communities in the western cape. The Palaszczuk government is investing \$8.86 million worth of works currently underway for the refurbishment of the medical imaging department to house Weipa's first CT scanner, the creation of a new primary healthcare clinic and the establishment of a birthing centre as well as relocating and upgrading the hospital pharmacy and the renal dialysis unit. I also got to hear how this investment will upgrade the hospital air-conditioning and chiller systems.

The CT scanner project was announced last year and has been funded by a \$1.15 million partnership between Rio Tinto and Old Mapoon Aboriginal Corporation, together with a \$1.35 million contribution from the Queensland government. The new CT scanner means that 40 to 50 patients a month from Weipa and the wider western cape region will no longer need to travel out of the region for clinical investigation. With the scanner on site, Weipa doctors and visiting specialists can perform more services in Weipa. This will allow the continued delivery of high-quality health care within the western cape region and faster access to potentially lifesaving scans for cancer, stroke and other medical conditions.

Plans for the \$25 million new birthing service were announced last year and will include two additional doctors, five midwives, two health workers and an administrative officer by the time the unit is fully operational. In addition, service capacity will increase the number of general nursing, operational, administrative and allied health staff to support the new birthing and other services. It is expected that

the birthing unit will deliver up to 70 babies a year, servicing Cape York communities including Weipa, Aurukun, Coen, Kowanyama, Lockhart River, Mapoon and Pormpuraaw. Expectant women will no longer be required to travel to Cairns to have their babies and can now have the option of having their babies closer to home. Of course, women with higher risk pregnancies will continue to travel to Cairns.

On top of the millions already invested into the health service, the Palaszczuk government recently announced that funding will be committed this financial year for an additional 30 all-weather car parks to be constructed to address the congested parking issue at the hospital which will allow safe and easy access for visitors at the hospital. I am proud to see vital funds invested into the Weipa Integrated Health Service because it will make a world of difference for people like John, who no longer has to make that big decision to leave his home, family and community behind to receive treatment in Cairns. Hospital upgrades formed part of the package of more than \$100 million worth of capital works projects for the Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Service's region either completed in the past three years, underway or in the planning stages. From 2009 to 2021 Labor has delivered. I could not be any prouder to represent a government that truly delivers to the needs of people, no matter where they live.