



Speech By  
**Cynthia Lui**


**MEMBER FOR COOK**

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## **MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

### **Torres Strait Islands, Health Infrastructure**

 **Ms LUI** (Cook—ALP) (2.51 pm): How wonderful it is to represent a government that is listening and delivering to Queenslanders right across this state. The Torres Strait would have to be one of the most unique and typically one of the most complex regions in Queensland, affected by remoteness and isolation. When it comes to health, we must consider the unique geographical make-up of the region to ensure we are reaching those living in the most vulnerable communities in Far North Queensland.

The Torres Strait Islands spread across some 48,000 square kilometres, with Saibai Island being just four kilometres away from Papua New Guinea. I say that again because I want to highlight how vast Queensland really is. We share an international border with Papua New Guinea, and we are the only state in Australia to face those challenges. I have mentioned that before for two reasons: because I want us to always remember the vastness of the region and because any investment in remote communities in Queensland is vital as we are addressing the social outcomes for First Nations people right across this state. Any investment that is put into communities is used to work with those communities to alleviate some of the pressures that come with remoteness and isolation in this state.

The further north you travel, the more the impact on social outcomes widens and this directly contributes to the health outcomes. I know people already know this. There are vast challenges for all of our communities. I will always stand in this parliament to advocate strongly for the challenges of my communities because, like I said, remoteness is always going to work against any outcomes in my communities. Investing in the right infrastructure to make health care more accessible is something I am really passionate about. Coming from the Torres Strait and having lived and grown up on one of the outer islands, I know firsthand how challenging it is. I have seen the effects it has had on people. It is about listening and delivering to the needs of all people, whatever challenges they face.

When it comes to health, I am proud to represent this government because we are out there listening to the community and delivering on the demands of communities. Last year the Palaszczuk government announced a \$46 million investment for the redevelopment of Thursday Island Hospital as part of this government's commitment to addressing the social outcomes for people in the region. This was on top of the \$17 million we already committed to redevelop four outer island primary healthcare centres in the region. Further out in the Torres Strait on the outer islands, there is only a clinic to support the vast health needs of the people in those regions. I am really excited about this investment into the hospital. I know the benefit that it will have for people in the region. It will mean a lot for people from the outer islands of the Torres Strait, as we have only one hospital in the region to cater for all the different needs of people throughout the region.

The redeveloped TI Hospital will have 31 inpatient beds, seven emergency department spaces, an operating theatre with four recovery spaces, a birthing suite, a birthing pool and additional procedural space that can also be used for emergency birthing. I cannot express enough how excited I am by this. I cannot express enough how proud I am of a government that is looking to address inequity across the

board but more so inequity related to remoteness. We know how challenging it can be because the services they need are usually away from their homes and people have to make the big sacrifice of leaving their home and family behind. This investment will bring services closer to home and increase our service capacity at the hospital. We want people to stay in communities so I am really excited about this.