



Speech By  
**Cynthia Lui**


**MEMBER FOR COOK**

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Record of Proceedings, 16 June 2021

**MOTION**

**Health System**

 **Ms LUI** (Cook—ALP) (5.37 pm): I consider myself an optimist, but I must admit that I am losing all hope that one day the LNP will come into this House and back our health system instead of bagging it. Even in the face of this record budget, a budget that is over 50 per cent greater than when they were in office, they continue to run down our health system and, by extension, denigrate the great work of all those who work in it. After the challenges presented by COVID that we all have been through together, one would think the opposition would rally around Queensland's achievements and the mighty work of our clinical staff in keeping their fellow Queenslanders safe. One would think they would take a moment to reflect upon the COVID catastrophe continuing to unfold around the world that we have so far avoided. I applaud the efforts of all Queenslanders, particularly our health workers, in delivering such an outstanding outcome. Let's not talk about the 64 times the LNP called for the borders to open.

The LNP may have a new jockey, but it is the same old 'caught in the rut, lead weight of negativity in the saddlebags' LNP horse. One would think if they were going to rubbish the budget they could at least get their story straight. The Leader of the Opposition said that there would be cuts to HHS budgets. There are increases to the budgets of every single HHS. He said that the capital budget had been cut. Once leasing arrangements from last budget are taken into account, there is a 23.7 per cent increase.

This is a health budget that delivers for Queensland and delivers for the Cairns region, the Torres Strait and Cape York. I welcome the record \$1.81 billion budget allocation for the Cairns and Hinterland HHS which represents an increase of 62 per cent on the budget provided in the final budget of the Newman government in 2014-15. I also welcome the record \$250 million allocated to the Torres and Cape HHS which represents an increase of 45.6 per cent on the 2014-15 budget in the final year of the LNP's term in office. This budget also adds a further two staff to the cape and an additional 353 staff to the Cairns HHS.

**Mrs Frecklington** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Order, member for Nanango.

**Ms LUI:** It is further evidence, if any were needed, that the Palaszczuk government is committed to investing in people and services in stark contrast to the havoc wrought by the LNP's program of sacking and cutting. The budget also provides \$7.7 million towards the accelerated delivery of the upgrade of the Cairns emergency department—

**Mrs Frecklington** interjected.

**Ms LUI:**—and funding for the Block D ward fit-out which will create—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Member for Nanango, you are warned.

**Ms LUI:**—an additional 11 beds and the Cairns hybrid theatre. These investments build on the \$70 million committed for the construction of a new mental health unit and the \$16.5 million for the development of a business case and land purchase for the construction of a new Cairns health

innovation centre as part of a partnership with JCU which will give Cairns Hospital university status. I also welcome the \$2.5 million towards a total commitment of \$7 million to replace the health building on Mer Island and the \$2.6 million for a new CT scanner in Mareeba. I was also delighted by the more than \$37 million over the next two years as part of the \$363 million investment in the Making Tracks initiative to improve the life expectancy of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people allocated to improving health outcomes for Indigenous Queenslanders.

The Palaszczuk government has delivered almost 1,200 beds since it came to power and will continue to deliver many hundreds more in coming years, including the 174 that the Premier announced two weeks ago that will be built at Mater Springfield. The very Labor budget delivered by the Treasurer yesterday stands in stark contrast to the recent actions of the Commonwealth government. The changes it is proposing to Medicare rebates across hundreds of surgeries will not only make health care more expensive; it will inevitably drive more patients onto public hospital waiting lists and add even more pressure to our already stretched health system. On this issue—an issue that really matters and will directly impact health services in Queensland—the Leader of the Opposition says nothing.

**Mr Saunders** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Member for Maryborough, you are interjecting over your own team. I am going to warn you. You are on a warning.

**Ms LUI:** Instead of talking down the Queensland health system and Queensland health workers, he should ring Scott Morrison and Greg Hunt and get them to reverse this damaging decision.