



Speech By  
**Les Walker**


**MEMBER FOR MUNDINGBURRA**

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## **MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

### **Townsville University Hospital**

 **Mr WALKER** (Mundingburra—ALP) (2.50 pm): It is happy birthday for the Townsville University Hospital. It is in fact a happy 20th birthday. This team of committed Queenslanders has a lot to celebrate. They have served our community with distinction by doing a fantastic job in the largest tertiary hospital in Northern Australia. I say a huge thank you to all the doctors, nurses, staff, maintenance crew, security team, our champion volunteers and all of the stakeholders who support staff, patients and their family members.

It has been a big 20 years for the Townsville University Hospital since it relocated from the former North Ward site and opened its doors in Douglas on 10 October 2001. The first Townsville hospital was established in 1882 in North Ward. The two-storey brick building accommodated only 70 patients. In May 1903 Cyclone Leonta struck Townsville causing extensive local damage and the hospital partially collapsed. The second Townsville general hospital opened in North Ward on 21 April 1951—70 years ago.

You will now find the Townsville University Hospital located near James Cook University in Douglas. The Townsville University Hospital provides 742 beds and bed alternatives like dialysis chairs. The hospital has also been funded \$13 million for an extra 32 beds at the south block. This is on top of the recently completed extra 12 beds for the paediatric emergency department. You may recall, Mr Deputy Speaker, the announcement of a new paediatric cardiac unit for the Townsville University Hospital. This was to help treat and manage over 150 young people from across the Townsville and North Queensland region who have serious cardiac conditions.

Next year will mark 140 years of providing health services to Townsville and the region—140 years of amazing change and challenges in the area of medicine and health. The most challenging and the most recent is the COVID-19 pandemic—a challenge that the medical professionals and volunteers have met head on. They have done us very proud and kept us safe.

Since our first hospital in Townsville nearly 140 years ago, we now have a world-class tertiary hospital right next door to James Cook University, a world-class university providing professional courses like a Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery and several nursing and midwifery degrees. It is a fantastic partnership.

I might add that my beautiful daughter Chantelle completed her Bachelor of Nursing at James Cook University. She worked on Palm Island and with a highly skilled team in ICU at the Townsville University Hospital and now works with a team of very dedicated professionals at the Princess Alexandra Hospital here in Brisbane. I give a big shout-out and thank you to all health professionals who have kept Queensland safe. Your services are truly appreciated.

I know those on the other side of the House do not like hearing the truth. However, it is the Palaszczuk Labor government that continually delivers on improved health services that keep Queenslanders safe. In this financial year, 2021-22, there has been a \$1.352 billion investment in health

infrastructure alone across the state. That is right: a \$1.352 billion investment in infrastructure alone. We have a lot to celebrate here in Queensland, especially in Townsville, with the continual investment in the region's health services.

**Mr Healy** interjected.

**Mr WALKER:** I take that interjection. The Townsville University Hospital sits in the heart of the seat of Mundingburra alongside James Cook University. It is very important that we continually invest in this health facility and work closely with James Cook University and others to expand health services as the population grows.

Mr Deputy Speaker, as you may be aware, 40 per cent of the world's population lives in the tropics on 36 per cent of the world's land mass. A report from State of the Tropics states that by 2050 half of the world's population will be living in the tropics. Queensland, being a leader in research and development in so many areas, can also be a leader in tropical medicine research moving forward. I feel that the Townsville University Hospital, James Cook University and private sector partners are at the forefront of tropical medicine research.

Once again, very happy 20th birthday to the Townsville University Hospital and a big thank you to the very important team there that provides a world-class service to not only Townsville but all of Northern Australia. Happy 20th birthday!

*(Time expired)*