




Speech By
Hon. Yvette D'Ath

MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Palliative Care and End-of-Life Care

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (9.56 am): As our population continues to boom and age so, too, will demand for health services, including palliative care. I would like to start by acknowledging the incredible work of the palliative care teams and staff throughout Queensland. Many of us have experienced the loss of a loved one, and many of us have seen firsthand the impact specialised palliative care staff have during our times of grief and loss. That is why our government wants to ensure Queenslanders have access to compassionate care, in the most appropriate setting, at the end of their lives.

Queenslanders deserve to have choice and control over how they spend their final days. That is why the Palaszczuk government is delivering \$171 million for palliative care funding that we announced at the last election. This is the single biggest investment in palliative care funding in Queensland's history. This record funding will help develop a new palliative and end-of-life care strategy to strengthen and reform end-of-life care, by providing improved equity of access and choice for Queenslanders and more frontline palliative care staff.

The new funding is in addition to existing hospital and health service funding, which will continue to increase over time. In the last 12 months we have also provided \$12.9 million to non-government organisations to deliver palliative care services in the community. By 2025-26 it is expected, based on current projections, that Queensland Health will spend close to \$250 million each year on palliative care. Importantly, this record new funding will have a strong focus on regional, rural and remote community-based services. It will mean that no matter where people live, they will have access to compassionate care, in the most appropriate setting, at the end of their life.

The funding will be focused on growing and investing in Queensland's specialist palliative care workforce and improve home based and after-hours care and support with over 290 jobs expected. Since 2015 we have employed over 7,500 new additional nurses and midwives, including the creation of a new palliative care nurse navigator role. That is why at the last election we committed to employing an additional 5,800 nurses and midwives.

Today I can announce that Queensland Health is commencing statewide consultation with clinicians, non-government organisations and peak bodies to develop the new palliative and end-of-life care strategy and workforce plan. We encourage all to engage in this consultation to ensure that this strategy and workforce plan is for the long term.

The truth is that many of us do not put much thought into end of life or end-of-life care. Typically, it is something people find difficult to discuss, but it is time we rethink this as a community. Investing in palliative care is just one important area to invest in and have discussions about. I encourage people to look at their healthcare plan for the future, whether it is an advance health directive, enduring powers of attorney or wills, or even the important discussion around putting themselves on the register to be an

organ donor. These are discussions we should be having publicly but also with our closest friends and loved ones. I encourage people to have these discussions. They are important decisions and it is important that our loved ones know what our wishes are for our future plans and end of life.