




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON

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PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENT

Regional Medical Pathway

 **Mr O'ROURKE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (2.59 pm): The Regional Medical Pathway is a great collaboration between four partners. Central Queensland University of Australia, the University of Queensland and the Central Queensland and Wide Bay hospital and health services are proud that the first intake of Bachelor of Medical Science students began at the beginning of this year and are working incredibly hard at their studies. This pathway includes 32 students across two sites—Rockhampton and Bundaberg—where 43 per cent of the students are from regional, rural or remote areas and 9.3 per cent of the cohort identify as having a First Nation background.

The Regional Medical Pathway aims to produce locally trained doctors in Central Queensland and Wide Bay and deliver expanded services, safer care, research and learning opportunities and a substantial economic benefit to our regions. This work is an evidence based workforce strategy that is crucial to improving health access across our communities. We in regional Queensland have really struggled to attract health staff, particularly doctors. Research evidence indicates that students who study in regional and remote communities for longer than one year are four times more likely to continue to live and work in those communities after graduation.

As a regional MP, I know that some of our brightest students are relocating to major centres to complete their medical studies. I can easily understand that over a six-year period students make new friends and enter in relationships, and then it is hard for them to return to regional centres. The Regional Medical Pathway commenced this year, and hopefully we will see our first UQ doctors of medicine graduate in 2026. This is a great partnership that will help ease the doctor shortage in regional Queensland, training hundreds of doctors into the future.

At North Rockhampton State High School we have the health hub, where students who want a career in health work can get a head start. They can actually finish school as enrolled nurses. This is great news as we look to grow our health workforce and give more young people the opportunity to build their careers locally. This project was actually funded through the state government with equipment donated by Ramsay Health Care. It is a great investment in our community and in our young people.