




Speech By
Hon. Scott Stewart

MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Resources Industries, Workforce

 **Hon. SJ STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Resources) (10.12 am): There cannot be a prosperous resources industry without its workers. Their health is a priority of paramount importance to the Palaszczuk government. That is why I was so excited to launch the HEART 5 mobile health unit as it hit the road for regional Queensland. This mobile health unit was developed in partnership between the Palaszczuk government, Resources Safety & Health Queensland, and Heart of Australia. It provides a range of health monitoring services to Queensland's regional mine and quarry workers, which is vital in the early detection of mine dust lung diseases.

HEART 5 is one of a kind. Its groundbreaking engineering, design and construction has drawn on expertise from around the world. Importantly, it was built right here in Queensland, in Narangba—another example of this state's amazing manufacturing capability—creating and supporting jobs as part of the Palaszczuk government's economic recovery plan as we emerge from the Omicron wave.

Queensland's mobile health unit is a world first. It includes a high-resolution, battery operated CT scanner—and I am not talking about AA batteries here. It is designed to work anywhere and everywhere, every time. HEART 5 is outfitted with other equipment vital in protecting the health of our current and former mine and quarry workers—with an onboard chest X-ray machine, complex lung function testing and general assessment services.

With HEART 5, the mobile health unit recommendations made by the parliamentary committee inquiry into the re-identification of coal workers' pneumoconiosis—which a number of members on both sides of the House were involved in—have been delivered. I would like to thank: Dr Rolf Gomes and his team at Heart of Australia; RSHQ; Mining and Energy Union district president Stephen Smyth; the former member for Mirani, Jimmy Pearce; and mine dust lung disease victims' advocacy groups whose voices have been instrumental throughout this process. I would also like to give a shout-out to former minister Dr Anthony Lynham for his work. He did a lot of work; I just picked up the keys and started the engine.

Following HEART 5's launch in Brisbane, I joined the team on the road in Collinsville, where free lung checks were offered to more than 70 retired miners. I am advised that on its first week of official operations, HEART 5 has already detected abnormalities in some lung screenings. Those patients will now be referred for treatment, which is vital early intervention that could save their lives. Heart of Australia is working with local medical providers regarding ongoing treatment. In the past, the tyranny of distance may have delayed patients' access to these highly specialised screenings. As we know, blokes are not good at going to the doctor. This is about the doctor going to them—the help will now go to them.

After Collinsville, I joined the assistant health minister in Mackay to meet with local industry stakeholders at the HEART 5 open day to speak about how this fantastic investment is already helping regional Queenslanders. People travelled from throughout Central Queensland to see this important

facility, which shows just how important it is for our resources workers and our former resources workers, after they have hung up their high-vis and their hard hats. HEART 5 demonstrates our commitment to the prevention and early detection of mine dust lung diseases, ensuring better health outcomes for our Queensland workers.