




Speech By
Hon. Yvette D'Ath

MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

International Nurses Day

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (10.29 am): Today we celebrate International Nurses Day which also marks the birthday of one of the founders of modern nursing, Florence Nightingale. Just a week on from International Day of the Midwife, which we celebrated on 5 May, we are reminded once more of the vital role nurses and midwives play in our community. I want to join with the Premier and everyone on this side of the chamber in saying thank you to Queensland's nurses, including those who are visiting in the gallery today and particularly our nurse navigators who are joining us.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mrs D'ATH: I acknowledge Beth Mohle, Secretary of the Queensland Nurses and Midwives' Union, for her strong advocacy on behalf of her members. To all of the nurses—our enrolled and registered nurses, our midwives, our nurse practitioners—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Members to my left, the level of interjection is too high. The Minister for Health has the call.

Mrs D'ATH: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am trying to recognise the nurses who work so hard across our state each and every day. To our nurse practitioners and our nurse navigators, we say thank you for all of the work that you do. Whether you work in our busiest tertiary hospitals or whether you work in the most remote health facility in this state, whether you work in disabilities or aged care, we say thank you for the great work that you do.

Government members: Hear, hear!

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Deputy Leader of the Opposition!

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, member for McConnel and member for Thuringowa! The House will come to order!

Mrs D'ATH: That is why we have hired more than 10,600 full-time-equivalent additional nurses and midwives since 2015. This includes more than 2,560 graduate nurses and midwives starting in Queensland hospitals in 2022. Nurses and midwives play such a valuable role in our community and I do want to single out aged care as there is a public discussion going on about nurse-to-resident ratios which we wholeheartedly support and also the fact that aged-care workers deserve a decent wage

because they are looking after our most vulnerable in the community. Nurses bring new Queenslanders into the world, they care for them in our hospitals or our community and the most vulnerable, they support people during the most difficult and trying times.

As I spoke to some of our nurses this morning, I made the point that they are there when we take our first breath and they are there when we take our last breath and we say thank you for the incredible work they do each and every day. We thank them for what they did through COVID over the last two years—the testing, the vaccinating, the endless work in the hospitals and again in aged care dealing with our most vulnerable people with disabilities and managing all of that with COVID as well. Throughout the pandemic our nurses have been at the very forefront of protecting Queenslanders and keeping them safe.

One of the Palaszczuk government's proudest achievements is the introduction of nurse-to-patient ratios in Queensland, becoming one of the first jurisdictions in the world to do so. Research published in the *Lancet* has estimated that Queensland's nurse-to-patient ratios meant 145 fewer deaths, 255 fewer readmissions and 29,222 fewer hospital days. In addition to better quality of care and patient outcomes, the savings due to fewer readmissions and shorter lengths of stay in hospital was approximately \$70 million.

I want to acknowledge the nurse navigators and the great work that they do. It was the Palaszczuk government that committed to employing up to 400 nurse and midwife navigators as part of our program. This program consists of senior advanced practice registered nurses working with patients and their carers to help them navigate, understand and manage their healthcare needs. Importantly, navigators ensure the most complex and vulnerable clients are supported close to home and in their communities, and again this morning I heard of the great work our navigators are doing with our First Nations people in the cape and Torres and also on the Gold Coast. The work that our nurse and midwife navigators is doing is saving children from going into the child safety system and going into foster care, so thank you again for all of the great work that you are doing.

To all of our nurses and midwives across the state, we will walk with you, we will listen, we will learn from you. We will face these challenges in our health system together because, without you, we cannot achieve the best health care for all Queenslanders. Today on this International Nurses Day we say thank you on behalf of all Queenslanders.