




Speech By
Hon. Yvette D'Ath

MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

Record of Proceedings, 25 October 2022

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Ambulance Service

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (9.54 am): The Palaszczuk government backs our paramedics and our Queensland Ambulance Service staff. Since 2015 we have delivered more than 1,000 new ambulance operatives, including more than 500 ambulance operatives during this term of government.

Our Ambulance Service is the busiest in the country. Federal government data shows that Queensland has 233 incidents per 1,000 head of population. That is compared to New South Wales figures of 121.2 per 1,000 head of population. Part of the reason our Ambulance Service is so busy is the fact Queensland is one of only two jurisdictions in Australia that does not charge patients for the use of an ambulance. As our Queensland Health and Hospitals Plan notes, to meet this demand the QAS employs the highest proportion of qualified ambulance officers per 100,000 of the population in the country. In addition, our record QAS budget of \$1.1 billion is ensuring we can continue to deliver new and replacement ambulance stations as well as ambulance vehicles.

As well as investing in these frontline resources, the Palaszczuk government is committed to investing in innovative models of care. Last week I had the pleasure of announcing the expansion of the QAS Clinical Hub. The clinical hub started in 2020 and was utilised to support those in hotel quarantine who required health care. It has also been utilised to deal with the significant number of triple 0 calls for ambulances we have seen throughout the course of the pandemic, particularly at the start of this year with all of those people who were reporting positive COVID tests. It uses a multidisciplinary team to provide people seeking an ambulance with access to clinical advice, health navigation and referral pathways without requiring the use of an ambulance.

This model has proven to be an immense success. Having started with just five paramedics and two emergency medical dispatchers in 2020, an additional investment of \$42 million over four years will lead to the considerable expansion of this nation-leading statewide initiative. The investment will scale up the clinical hub to be a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week service with 64 specialist staff including senior paramedics, EMDs, emergency specialists, mental health clinicians and nurse practitioners. Already the clinical hub interacts with about 250 Queenslanders a day, with one in four of those people being diverted away from our emergency departments and receiving more appropriate care elsewhere. These figures are expected to be even better when the expanded services of the clinical hub are fully operational.

Our investment will ensure that more Queenslanders are able to access the benefits of this innovative service delivery. This type of innovation builds on a variety of diversionary measures including our QAS mental health co-responder model, our Queensland Health residential aged-care support services and the Metro North virtual emergency department. These innovations can only occur because of the record investment the Palaszczuk government is making in health, and the Palaszczuk government understands that an investment in health is an investment in Queenslanders.