




Speech By
Hon. Shannon Fentiman

MEMBER FOR WATERFORD

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Budget, Women's Health; Vaccination; Hospitals, Beds

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women) (9.43 am): We know that women have historically experienced discrimination and a lack of specified support in our health system, and health conditions such as endometriosis are only just beginning to be well understood within the community. Sadly, one in three women have had their health concerns dismissed by doctors, according to the 2021 Australia Talks survey. That is why this year's budget includes almost \$35 million for initiatives that are aimed at boosting women's health care. This includes initial funding to support the development of our first ever Queensland Women's Health Strategy to address the health needs of women and which I look forward to releasing in the coming months.

Women also deserve access to birthing services close to home, and this budget delivers \$42 million for rural maternity services. This funding will allow the expansion of outreach maternity services to help reduce the need for expecting mums to travel to larger centres. This funding is building on the learnings from the Rural Maternity Taskforce to address concerns raised by expecting mothers and healthcare workers. We are putting money on the table to develop place-based solutions, and I look forward to discussing these matters at my maternity round table today following question time.

The challenges being felt by maternity services across the state are not unique to Queensland, but I am excited that Queensland will lead the discussion about how we can improve maternity services around the country. This budget also provides an additional \$13.7 million to support the Growing Deadly Families strategy so that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies born in Queensland have the strongest start to life.

This budget also recognises the health and wellbeing of sexual assault victims and survivors. That is why \$1.73 million will go towards ensuring the integrated, timely and local delivery of high-quality trauma-sensitive forensic medical examinations for victims of sexual assault. There is \$4.4 million allocated to double the number of domestic and family violence clinicians to ensure we have the staff to respond safely and appropriately to patients experiencing domestic and family violence. This budget absolutely delivers on women's health. It delivers on maternity services and women's safety—because the Palaszczuk government delivers for women.

I want to take a short amount of time to also update the House because it is flu season and it is a timely reminder for Queenslanders to get their flu vaccination and their COVID booster. Given the significant national shortage of GPs, it is so important we do whatever we can to minimise that pressure on our emergency departments. Taking the pressure off our hospitals is about looking after ourselves with our vaccinations but it is also about the government investing in staff and investing in beds in our hospitals to relieve the pressure.

While I am talking about beds, I want to take this opportunity to sincerely apologise to the House. Yesterday I said the Palaszczuk government had invested 1,350 new beds since coming to government. I can advise that number—much like the LNP line of questioning yesterday—was slightly out of date. In fact the number of beds we have made available to our hospitals since 2015 is 1,532.

A government member: There is more.

Ms FENTIMAN: It is way more beds. I can advise the House that, as at April this year, there has been an increase in our hospital bed base of 542 beds since 2020. Most importantly, in this budget we will deliver between now and the next election more than 500 extra beds, because that is what we do. We build more beds and we invest in our frontline staff. It is all part of our Big Build and Putting Patients First, our plan to reduce ambulance ramping. It is all possible because of our record health budget.