




Speech By
Hon. Yvette D'Ath

MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

Record of Proceedings, 16 March 2023

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Cairns, Health Services

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (11.01 am): Before I address my statement, I want to acknowledge and congratulate Minister Grace for the great work in partnering with the health sector in what we are doing in the education space. It will make all the difference. That is what prevention and early intervention are all about.

Ensuring that Queenslanders in regional and rural parts of the state continue to have access to world-class health care has always been a priority of the Palaszczuk government. That commitment was underlined as we made two announcements in the past week in relation to the expansion of health services in Cairns. The first of these saw the member for Cairns open a purpose-built facility for patients requiring subacute care and rehabilitation. This facility will expand Cairns Hospital's Older Persons Sub-Acute and Rehabilitation Unit by an additional 45 beds through an agreement with Infinite Care's Edge Hill Orchards lodge. Located just 4.5 kilometres from Cairns Hospital, the Edge Hill Orchards lodge facility is perfectly suited to provide care to older persons and those requiring rehabilitation. It includes capacity to provide care for those living with dementia and has the full support of a team of nurses, allied health professionals and specialist doctors on site covering the facility 24/7. We announced this 45-bed subacute expansion project in our Queensland Health and Hospitals Plan, and I know the Treasurer will be delighted that we have delivered this. We said it would be operational by the second half of this year, but I am thrilled that it has now already opened.

Earlier this week, we announced that the new surgical centre that is part of our \$250 million Cairns Hospital expansion project will be constructed on the corner of Charles and Digger streets, close to the Cairns Hospital campus. The new building will be adjacent to JCU's Cairns Tropical Enterprise Centre and will form part of the Far North Queensland Health and Innovation Precinct. The proximity of our new state-of-the-art surgical centre to JCU will allow for stronger linkages for teaching, learning and research. The precinct will also accommodate the future Cairns Health and Innovation Centre, which will involve a purpose-built education, training, research and innovation centre and is critical to the hospital's transition to becoming a university hospital. The Palaszczuk government has provided more than \$4 million for the detailed business case for the Cairns Health and Innovation Centre to progress detailed planning, with the business case expected to be completed by the end of this year.

In addition to the new 32-bed surgical centre, our \$250 million Cairns Hospital expansion will also deliver a major refurbishment of the hospital that will provide a further 64 extra beds. It will also create around 611 jobs during construction, supporting the local economy and North Queenslanders.

The Palaszczuk government is also delivering the \$70 million Cairns Hospital mental health unit, the \$26.4 million Cairns Hospital emergency department expansion, and the \$11.5 million drug residential rehab and treatment service, with 10 beds for youths, in Cairns.

Only the Palaszczuk government can be trusted to deliver the infrastructure projects we need to meet the ever-growing demand for health services in Cairns and throughout our great state.