




Speech By
Hon. Yvette D'Ath

MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

Record of Proceedings, 29 March 2023

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Forensic DNA Testing

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (9.57 am): Today I wish to provide an update on the progress we have made in addressing the critical issues raised in the two reports from the Commission of Inquiry into Forensic DNA Testing in Queensland. Following the immense body of work undertaken by the commission of inquiry, for which the Palaszczuk government is extremely grateful, we have been working hard to develop a comprehensive approach to address Mr Sofronoff's recommendations.

Since we received the final report on 13 December last year, we have taken a range of immediate actions to restore faith in our criminal justice system. We have established the new unit, Forensic Science Queensland, to help us deliver the best forensic DNA services in Australia, with the appointment of the highly respected Professor Linzi Wilson Wilde as CEO. Walter Sofronoff KC and Julie Dick SC have been appointed as co-chairs of the advisory board for Forensic Science Queensland and the first meeting of the full interim advisory board occurred yesterday.

Work has been ongoing regarding the correction of 1,260 witness statements that were either untruthful or misleading, as recommended by the interim report. As of today, 564 cases have had their statements corrected. The Queensland government made \$29.5 million available to support further testing and analysis of samples. Regarding the testing of samples, the Australian Federal Police and the Institute of Environmental Science and Research in New Zealand are currently performing testing for FSQ in relation to bone analysis and Y-STR testing, and we continue to explore further arrangements with external providers.

In January, new revised sexual assault investigation kits were agreed by an across-agency subcommittee and underwent user testing. As a result, updates to the kit were made and the former will now go to the forensic medical examination subcommittee for approval. FSQ is undertaking a procurement process to source the kits and it is anticipated the new kits will be implemented midyear. We will continue to deliver on the long-term vision of establishing world-class forensic DNA services and restoring the community's faith in our criminal justice system.