




Speech By
Hon. Yvette D'Ath

MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Far North Queensland, Health; Coronavirus

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (10.03 am): When it comes to health in the Far North, the Palaszczuk government is delivering. The 2022-23 health budget invested \$1.5 billion in Far North Queensland. Indeed, since 2015 we have increased the Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service budget by 77 per cent and the Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Service budget by 61 per cent. Since 2015 we have delivered 1,315 frontline health workers for the Far North. That includes 271 new doctors, 798 new nurses and midwives, 65 new ambulance officers and 181 new allied health professionals. Not only are we delivering world-class health staff; we have also invested in the facilities to match. The Palaszczuk government is currently undertaking the largest health capital expansion program in the nation. For Far North Queensland that includes a hospital expansion, redevelopments, a new mental health facility and primary health centres.

We should not forget what we have already achieved as a government for the Far North since 2015. It is a long list, so bear with me. The Palaszczuk government has delivered: the \$17 million Torres Strait Primary Health Care Centre redevelopment; \$10 million Mossman Hospital ED upgrade; \$6.5 million Aurukun Primary Health Care Centre redevelopment; \$14.9 million Cairns South Health Precinct; \$10 million Cairns Hospital Improvement Project; \$4.5 million Cairns Hospital Hybrid Theatre; \$10 million Cairns Hospital endoscopy suite; \$1.45 million Cairns Hospital cardiac catheter lab; \$1.5 million Cairns Hospital pre-admission clinic; a new Mareeba CT scanner; and new Bamaga and Kowanyama staff accommodation facilities. That is just to name a few! We will continue to make record investments in the health of the Far North because delivering on health is in the Palaszczuk government's DNA.

I also want to update the parliament. On 5 May the World Health Organisation declared that COVID-19 is now an established and ongoing health issue and no longer a public health emergency of international concern. More than three years from when the pandemic was declared this is a significant milestone in the fight against COVID-19. I want to thank Queenslanders for following the health advice to support the state's response and keep our COVID-19 case numbers low. I offer my condolences to all those who have lost loved ones to this terrible virus. I know that nothing will mitigate the heartache they feel. I would like to conclude by paying tribute to all of the health workers, both on the front line and those behind the scenes, who made our COVID response the world-leading example it is clearly known as. All of them are truly heroes.