




Speech By
Hon. Yvette D'Ath

MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

Record of Proceedings, 10 May 2023

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Cairns Hospital; Rural and Remote Queensland, Health Workforce

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (5.52 pm): Today I was delighted to join the Premier, the Treasurer and the member for Cairns to make two very significant health announcements. We were able to let locals know that we are delivering the next phase of our Queensland Health and Hospitals Plan here in Cairns. We confirmed the award of the tender for the \$250 million Cairns Hospital expansion to Hansen Yuncken, a local company. This project will support 610 jobs during the construction and has an expected completion date of the first half of 2026. The expansion will deliver 96 new beds, 64 subacute beds to improve patient flow and 32 beds as part of a brand new surgical centre, which will further enhance the capacity of Cairns residents to access planned care.

Of course, more beds require more staff, which is why our Workforce Attraction Incentive Transfer Scheme is such a game changer. It provides a compelling reason for interstate or international healthcare workers to choose to live and work in Queensland. Any interstate or international healthcare worker who takes up a job in our public health system will receive \$10,000 upon commencing the role and \$10,000 after 12 months of service. In addition, we are making a further offer to our doctors to attract them to work in our rural and remote locations. We know that attracting our medical workforce to the rural and remote Queensland areas has been a challenge, but we also know that when our health professionals do make the decision to move to our beautiful rural and remote areas they never look back.

With the erosion of primary care over the last decade it is vital that we do all we can to ensure Queenslanders can access the right care at the right place at the right time. That is why we are offering an additional \$50,000 to doctors who make the decision to move to rural and remote communities. Any doctor who moves to a Modified Monash 4 to 7 location will receive \$25,000 after three months and \$25,000 after 12 months of service. That means that doctors will have additional incentives to live and work in locations like the Torres Strait, Mareeba, Atherton, Blackall, Roma or Mount Isa. This offering builds on the strong offers we put to our Queensland Health workers through our enterprise bargaining agreements including nation-leading wage rises that have not been matched by any other government in Australia. The Palaszczuk government is proud of our record of employing more than 17,000 more frontline health workers and we know that this new policy offer will help us employ even more.