




Speech By
Cynthia Lui

MEMBER FOR COOK

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Cape York and Torres Strait, Health Care

 **Ms LUI** (Cook—ALP) (2.16 pm): I rise to speak on some of the good things our Miles Labor government is doing to address health outcomes in Cape York and Torres Strait. Cook is one of the most complex electorates in Queensland, and communities in the Torres Strait and Cape York are probably one of the most socially disadvantaged area in the electorate. Job opportunities are few and far between, and because of the lack of employment opportunities there is a large majority of people on low wages. I also acknowledge that the tyranny of distance adds a lot of pressure on the health and wellbeing of people living in these communities, so when it comes to health, you cannot just look at health through a narrow lens.

Health is not only about the physical aspect of an individual's wellbeing; health is also about the social, emotional, mental, cultural and spiritual wellbeing of a person. When addressing health, it is important the government looks at health from an holistic perspective. The Miles government is committed to closing the gap for health outcomes in Cape York and Torres Strait. Some of the investment that we have delivered in Cape York and Torres Strait includes: the Thursday Island Hospital redevelopment; the TI Primary Healthcare Centre redevelopment; refurbishment of four primary healthcare centres on the outer islands of the Torres Strait, including Masig which I visited two years ago; brand new primary healthcare centre on Mer Island in the Torres Strait; delivering a brand new clinic in Pormpuraaw; staff accommodation in Hope Vale, Pormpuraaw, Laura and Bamaga; we have reinstated the birthing suite in Weipa; and we have committed to redeveloping Cooktown Hospital which I am very proud of. We are doing a lot of good things by investing in infrastructure because we acknowledge that quality of care is important and people living in these communities deserve the best health care.

Our strategy to addressing health care in the regions includes building on our nation-leading health equity legislation and our Making Tracks investment. Our First Nations First strategy aims to accelerate reform to improve health and wellbeing with First Nations Queenslanders.

There is lots we have done in this space to also look at the social determinants of health. Cost of living is one. We held a cost-of-living summit on Thursday Island in 2023. As a result of that, we have announced a \$64 million freight subsidy. We have increased the 5.2 per cent discount at the cash register to 20 per cent which is a huge increase, making food affordable in communities. Like I said, we need to look at health from an holistic perspective. We are delivering houses and more support for services looking after vulnerable Queenslanders.