



Speech By  
**Hon. Shannon Fentiman**


**MEMBER FOR WATERFORD**

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Record of Proceedings, 21 August 2024

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**Health Workforce Strategy**

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women) (9.47 am): More and more Australians are choosing Queensland to call home. In fact, by 2032, Queensland's population is expected to surpass six million and our government is committed to continuing to provide world-class health care to Queenslanders, old and new, no matter where they live. To do this, we need to recruit, retain and train a robust health workforce. That is why we launched the Health Workforce Strategy for Queensland to 2032, backed by a \$1.7 billion investment. The strategy charts a path to recruiting the additional 40,000 healthcare staff our system will need over the next decade in both clinical and operational roles.

This strategy builds on our proud record of bolstering our frontline health workforce. Since 2015, we have hired over 24,000 frontline health workers. Our medical workforce has grown faster than every other state, and we have delivered an enterprise bargaining agreement that makes our nurses and midwives the best paid in the country. In 2020, we said we would hire an additional 9,735 frontline health workers in this term of government, and we have smashed that goal earlier than expected.

Building on this success, we are taking steps to build a pipeline of homegrown talent including in specialised areas like anaesthetics and imaging. We are collaborating with the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists to support up to 20 GPs and rural generalists in completing an advanced diploma in obstetrics, complemented by a rural generalist training mentoring program. I was privileged to meet one of the talented GPO trainees, Dr Katie Bird, in Townsville recently.

Our Workforce Attraction Incentive Scheme is another incentive under the strategy that is seeing enormous success. Despite relentless criticism from those opposite, the scheme has attracted over 1,300 health workers to Queensland since it launched in July last year. This includes obstetrician Dr Clayton Grieve from Gladstone Hospital and clinical nurse Hayley from Cairns—both of whom have made the jump thanks to our scheme. What is more, Queensland Health's ongoing bold recruitment drive is successfully enticing international healthcare workers to call Queensland home, with more than 7,000 expressions of interest received during a four-month campaign. To date, 123 candidates have been offered roles across the state including in Townsville, Cairns, Mackay, West Moreton and the Sunshine Coast.

We are helping to fix a decade of federal LNP cuts to Medicare by securing the future of our primary care workforce. Our junior doctors will soon have access to a \$40,000 incentive to train as general practitioners, helping to build a pipeline that will keep our communities healthy across the next decade. We continue to advocate for increased Commonwealth supported places for medical students in our universities to ensure a sustainable pipeline of homegrown talent. These investments demonstrate our government's commitment to backing in our frontline health workforce and build upon

our free TAFE initiatives for nurses and mental health workers. Our mighty doctors, nurses and allied health workers support Queensland when they need it most, and only a Labor government will continue to support them.