




Speech By
Hon. Tim Nicholls

MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Weather Events, Health Services

 **Hon. TJ NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (2.19 pm): The health, wellbeing and care of Queenslanders is the No. 1 priority of the Crisafulli government. Care through our health department and health services across Queensland continued throughout the recent natural disasters. Now during disaster recovery, wellbeing remains a core priority of the Crisafulli government. With planning, preparation and perseverance, our teams at Queensland Health and the Queensland Ambulance Service kept the vast majority of our facilities operational at the peak of the severe weather events. Our EDs remained open to provide services to Queenslanders, and now we are moving straight back into business as usual. Wherever possible during the cyclone, patient planned care continued and impacted facilities have been brought back online as soon as possible.

In the south-east over the Tropical Cyclone Alfred weekend, we estimate that 75 per cent of planned care went ahead. Think about that: in the midst of a cyclone and tropical storm when people could not get there, Queensland Health delivered 75 per cent of planned care as well as emergency care. Facilities that were impacted continued providing exceptional patient care in challenging circumstances. While the Redlands Satellite Health Centre had to close due to power and access issues at the peak of the storm, it reopened as soon as possible at 2.30 pm on Tuesday afternoon.

This morning, together with the hardworking member for Redlands, I visited the Redlands Satellite Health Centre and met with the dedicated staff who stayed there for as long as they could and continued to provide services—staff like clinical nurse Nisha, who runs the dialysis unit, who temporarily relocated to the Redland Hospital with the patients and with the dialysis machines to ensure they continued to receive service. I also met the fantastic nurse unit manager Michelle, who travelled to Stradbroke Island over the weekend to help provide care at the Marie Rose clinic to those in need. I want to give a big shout-out to Michelle and her father, Kel, who is a real red-hot LNP supporter. It is always good to have them out there. You keep that trailer going, Kel.

A government member interjected.

Mr NICHOLLS: There are plenty of them in the Redlands and there will be even more after last weekend, as there will be in Hervey Bay. The Hervey Bay Hospital continued providing services despite the heavy localised flooding. Out in Laidley, the Laidley Hospital's isolation by floodwaters continued and we provided services because, with the assistance of the QAS, a medical officer from Metro North was transferred in via a rotary wing asset—a helicopter—to provide services when no other way of getting in or out could be found. The Gold Coast University Hospital—the third largest in the state with 700 beds—temporarily operated on generator power for 48 hours and housed 81 vulnerable patients who were moved into the unit because they were not able to get the care they needed from their carers outside of the hospital. They were looked after by the team at the Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service.

Like all Queenslanders and all on this side of the House, I was pleased to see the rapid resumption of full operations of medical services on our bay islands despite the battering they copped as TC Alfred twirled around off the coast. The QAS operated throughout, putting on over 110 additional staff members and supporting a taskforce to conduct welfare checks using the clinical hub which had additional doctors, nurses and paramedics on board to maintain oversight of impacted clients.

While there has been a focus on events in the south-east, we cannot forget North Queensland. Two weeks ago I met the local renal dialysis patients who were receiving service all during the events up there. During the peak of the crisis when water supply to the Ingham Hospital was disrupted, those patients were urgently flown to Townsville University Hospital so their dialysis could continue. I also met Ingham pharmacist Brenden Seri, who is well known to the Premier, who slept overnight in his pharmacy at the peak of the floods. With the help of his nonna's generator that he stole a boat to go and get—and he stole the generator off his nonna because she still did not know about it—and managed to keep his pharmacy open and continued dispensing essential medications. For those who do not know, today is national Thank Your Pharmacist Day, so a big thankyou to all of the pharmacists who kept the medications going during the recent events, including Brenden and his team at the Ingham pharmacy.

While immediate dangers have passed, it is important to remain vigilant about health and safety. On top of that, we continue sending messages out, and I urge all residents in affected areas to make sure that they look after themselves and keep heeding the messages from Queensland Health.