




Speech By
Hon. Tim Nicholls

MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Health System

 **Hon. TJ NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (10.04 am): This budget is delivering the single greatest investment in health care in this state's history. In fact, it is so big that we had to get a bigger placement printed so we could let people know. I table a copy of that placement for the information of members of the House.

Tabled paper: Document, undated, titled 'Queensland Health: Health services when you need them' [795](#).

This budget is the fresh start for Queensland we promised to help Queenslanders access world-class care when they need it. The LNP Crisafulli government is delivering a record \$33.1 billion to deliver easier access to healthcare services in 2025-26 and beyond. Our budget shows the government is stepping up to fix Labor's woeful mismanagement of health services and health infrastructure. Importantly, in a cost-of-living crisis we are providing more free public health services for Queenslanders than ever before—more than Labor was ever able to do. We are starting by axing Labor's patient tax. It is gone, gone, gone.

More than that: we are investing. We are delivering on our commitment to stabilise elective surgery waitlists within 12 months. Our \$1.75 billion commitment over four years is the largest investment in surgery in Queensland Health's history. This funding will provide more than 30,000 surgeries in 2025-26, leveraging the public and private hospital sectors, and will include an expansion of the Surgery Connect program. Ramsay Health Care has welcomed 'Queensland's nation-leading commitment' to boost elective surgery delivery. St Vincent's has also welcomed the investment. They said—

St Vincent's looks forward to ensuring many Queenslanders get their elective surgery sooner over the next four years.

The former government's record stands in stark contrast. They allowed the elective surgery waitlist to almost double from nearly 35,500 to more than 66,000. In fact, Labor was set to cut over 20,000 elective surgeries next year because they failed to fund them in their budget. This will not happen under our watch.

We are delivering on our commitment to drive ambulance ramping down to 30 per cent by 2028 through a \$1.7 billion investment. That includes more than a billion dollars for the Queensland Ambulance Service to deliver 900 more ambulance personnel over the next four years, more ambulance stations and more vehicles on the road. The former government allowed ambulance ramping to go from 15 per cent to the nation's worst record of over 45.5 per cent during their term in government, risking the lives of consumers and patients. The good news just does not stop there: it continues, as we deliver on our commitment to grow the health workforce by 46,000 more workers by 2032. In 2025-26 we will make a down payment on that workforce by increasing it by 4,500, including 3,350 clinicians, improving access to essential health services.

Labor did not have a plan to grow the health workforce. In fact, they had set it up for cuts. Under Labor's last budget the health workforce was actually set to decrease by 1,794 FTEs. They did not fund it in the future years. That is Labor for you: 20,000 fewer surgeries and 1,700 fewer staff.

As Dr Nick Yim, the President of the AMAQ, has said, the \$33.1 billion expenditure shows the government recognises the urgent need to invest in our health system. He said, 'It is a relief to see that health remains a high priority.'

We are delivering on our commitment to build hospitals on time and on budget—on time and on budget. A centrepiece of the budget is the \$18½ billion Hospital Rescue Plan to deliver the biggest infrastructure investment in Queensland Health's history. From Currumbin to the cape, it is the largest ever investment in health infrastructure in Queensland and it will deliver 2,600 new beds.

We are also delivering a \$3.16 billion Timely Investment Infrastructure Maintenance program, including \$2.6 billion in new money—not like Labor did, not by pulling it from some other account, but actual new funding. This critical investment will address unfunded commitments and blowouts made by the former Labor government, as highlighted in the Auditor-General's report.

It has been a long speech, I know, but there is so much good news to get out about our investment, about saving Queenslanders money and about delivering health services. Our record health budget goes a long way to addressing the dire mismanagement and unfunded announcements of the former government. There is more work to be done, but we are delivering our commitment to establish a world-class health system for Queenslanders no matter where they live.