



Speech By
Bree James

MEMBER FOR BARRON RIVER

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ADJOURNMENT

Cairns Hospital

 **Ms JAMES** (Barron River—LNP) (9.27 pm): I rise today to share a history-making moment for Far North Queensland and the almost 300,000 people serviced by the Cairns Hospital. On average, each week 132 patients receive elective surgery, 44 babies are born, 1,601 people present to the ED and 1,757 people are admitted to hospital. The Cairns Hospital is a foundational pillar of our community and under Labor's watch our hospital workers were stretched to the limit. We do not have enough beds, enough parking spaces or even an adequate, safe helipad. The former government made false promises for an expanded hospital but they failed to actually put money in the budget for it. For more than a decade we waited for action and were left with nothing but unfulfilled promises, an overflowing ED and a dangerous helipad still located in a busy park.

Since taking government we have delivered several key health commitments: new advanced defibrillators for emergency services, an expanded transit lounge at Cairns Hospital, thousands of new frontline staff across Queensland and a second paediatric cardiologist for Far North Queensland that has been truly welcomed by the Far North community. Last week we delivered a once-in-a-generation investment for Far North Queensland—the biggest investment in the Far North of any state government. This is a \$1 billion investment to transform the Cairns Hospital into the world-class health facility and innovation precinct that our region deserves. By comparison, Labor's failed investment was less than a quarter of the Crisafulli government's commitment which left major parts of the project unfunded and forgotten.

Construction will commence in 2026. We will have a new and improved hospital by 2031. This is not a refurb or a minor upgrade; this is a complete revitalisation of the CBD and an overhaul of the health facility left to wither under the Labor government and under the watchful eyes of the member for Cairns. This is making sure that the people in Far North Queensland can access high-quality health care close to home, now and into the future.

The 30-year master plan provides a clear, staged road map to expand and modernise the hospital. It includes three new buildings, a health innovation surgical centre, a multistorey car park and a health management hub. It will also include a new cyclone rated helipad to be constructed on the top of D block. It will also deliver new operating theatres, 16 day surgery spaces, 40 inpatient beds, specialist outpatient services, clinical trials, training and simulation spaces, plus a 950-space staff-only multistorey car park to make it safer for our health workers and free up parking for patients and visitors. These health services to Cairns will better serve both residents and our hardworking health workers. Thank you so much to Leena Singh, chief executive officer, and her entire team for the incredible work they do. It is a huge win for our economy and for the 289,000 residents who call Far North Queensland home.