

Media Release

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Health and Ambulance Services Minister Cameron Dick

Queensland Health budget puts patients first

Queensland's multi-billion dollar health budget will jump 7.7 per cent to meet growing demands for health services across the state.

Health and Ambulance Services Minister Cameron Dick said the health budget would increase to \$15.274 billion in 2016-17, ensuring world-class health services for Queenslanders.

Mr Dick said the bulk of the new budget, totalling \$12.614 billion, would go to the states 16 Hospital and Health Services, Mater Health Services and Saint Vincent's Health Australia.

"This is a Labor health budget where the priority is on frontline services," said Mr Dick.

"The big increase is to the Hospital and Health Services, which deliver the health services on the ground throughout Queensland. This year's funding increase will mean more people will be treated in the health system and more staff will be employed."

The health budget also includes \$230 million to fund significant health infrastructure upgrades around the state, while a further \$170 million will be spent on upgrades to critical ICT infrastructure.

The Queensland Ambulance Service budget has also been increased by 6.3 per cent to \$673.1 million.

The budget also includes provision for ongoing work for ambulance stations at Collinsville, Rainbow Beach, Yandina, Bundaberg, Birtinya, Kenilworth, Coral Gardens, Wynnum and Thursday Island.

Mr Dick said the QAS budget also included the recruitment of an extra 110 ambulance officers and the commissioning of 170 new and replacement ambulances.

"This includes nearly \$16 million to progress work on new and replacement ambulance stations all around the state," said Mr Dick.

The budget also allocates \$9.6 million over the next three years to help hospital and health services build their capacity to prevent suicide.

"Shortly after I became Health Minister, I met Kerrie Keepa, who after suffering tragedy in her life, was seeking to make meaningful change with better suicide-prevention training for staff in our Emergency Departments.

"This new program is the next step, building the capacity of the health system to prevent and learn from suicide incidents wherever possible"

Mr Dick said the \$9.6 million *Suicide Prevention in Health Services Initiative* would comprise three major components:

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- The establishment and operation over three years of a Queensland Suicide Prevention Health Taskforce as a partnership between the Department of Health, Hospital and Health services and Primary Health Networks.
- Analysis of events relating to deaths by suspected suicide of people that had a recent contact with a health service to inform future actions and improvements in responses.
- Continue implementing training for hospital emergency department staff and other frontline acute mental health care staff in recognising, responding to and providing care to people presenting to hospital and health services with suicide risk.

Other highlights of the budget include:

- \$15.8 million over three years to address sexually transmitted infections in North Queensland;
- \$6 million over four years for pre-exposure prophylaxis which has the potential to eliminate the transmission of HIV in Queensland.

“The Government is also continuing to address the election commitment for the delivery of nurse navigator positions, delivering an additional 68 nurse navigators in 2016-17, on top of the 50 nurse navigators employed in 2015-16.”

The overall increase in the health budget to \$15.274 billion includes an increase in the state government’s operational allocation to health of 4.3 per cent.

Media Contact: Andrew Fraser 0428 690 679