




Speech By
Christopher Whiting

MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA

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**PUBLIC HEALTH (CHILD CARE VACCINATION) AND OTHER LEGISLATION
AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr WHITING** (Murrumba—ALP) (5.03 pm): I rise to speak in favour of this bill. I also feel strongly that vaccination is the responsibility of all of society. If we do not meet that responsibility, we suffer individually and also collectively. Not only that, when we survive those preventable diseases often our individual potential has been reduced. We do suffer for years. This is an issue of critical importance to me because I have two young children and another one on the way.

Ms Grace: Congratulations.

Mr WHITING: Thank you very much indeed. My son, Guy, was interviewed last week. He starts prep next year. I was quite happy to go along for his interview. Part of that was having to provide certification and proof of vaccination status. I was very glad to provide that. That they asked for that gives me confidence in the school, as they are making sure their students are immunised. It allays parents' fears when we are asked to do that.

My family's tale shows why I strongly support vaccination. Vaccination is not only about fatalities; it is also about the long-term effects on people who recover from diseases that could have been prevented through vaccination. My grandfather caught polio as a young man and walked with a limp for the rest of his life. He managed to be a wool classer—he worked out in Western Queensland—but he carried this disease in a way he probably never expected to. He was not able to enlist to serve in World War II, even though all of his mates did. Many of his mates did not come back after enlisting and going to Singapore. He carried the hurt of not only polio but also the loss of his mates for the rest of his life.

My mother caught measles at the age of four. She has had to wear glasses ever since. She experienced ongoing health effects from a disease that could have been prevented. She became a teacher, so she especially knows the importance of vaccination. She said to me—

Watching a small baby with whooping cough is enough to make anyone think very carefully about deciding not to vaccinate.

My sister Elizabeth caught whooping cough at age 12. Her lungs were scarred and she has had health problems ever since. She is one of the few people for whom the vaccine did not work. She also became a teacher and teaches early childhood. She said—

I am at the mercy of whatever the parents choose to send into the classroom. I rely on herd immunity, which is why I have caught whooping cough three times.

I will give the last word on this to my mother. She asked me to send this message to the parliament—

We are a community and we need to protect all, especially the most vulnerable.

That is why I commend this bill to the House.