



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

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (5.15 pm): I rise today to speak in support of the Public Health (Childcare Vaccination) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. Just as importantly, I also rise to congratulate the member for Lockyer and the Rickuss family on their latest grandchild, Lucy Skye. While wishing to express my best wishes, I am also reminded of my own daughter, Lucy Rose, who is now four, and of the time when she was a baby. With my youngest child, it was my responsibility to take her down to get her vaccinations. With good and clear instructions—Jackie does not trust me that much so she made sure that I knew exactly what to do—I took Lucy Rose down to the local GP's surgery with the handy red immunisation passbook and waited to get her immunisations. Whilst sitting in the waiting room I allowed my mind to stray and to think and dwell on the task ahead. I knew that there are tiny chances of adverse side effects. Of course, not being a great fan of needles myself, I felt for little Lucy as she squirmed in my arms.

However, I certainly resisted these urges and I certainly did not allow my mind to wander through the darker recesses of the internet that so many on the other side have spoken about where there is really an active rejection of science and of the importance of public health. When Lucy finally got in to see the nurse to get her immunisation, she sat mesmerised by the promise of a bright-red lollipop and briefly cried as the needle surprised her, but was instantly gratified by the unwrapping of the lollipop. I was proud, not just that I protected my daughter from a series of diseases, but that I took my family to be part of the collective shield against the threat of diseases. In our society, we can do so little as individuals and so much more as part of a collective. That is true when it comes to immunisation to protect against childhood diseases.

After Lucy was born, every time I took her out I lived with a little fear for the reasons that the member for Mackay spoke about when she referred to her friend's baby, that she could be exposed to the dangers of whooping cough. As members no doubt know, whooping cough is a very contagious respiratory infection.

Mr Butcher: It is terrible.

Mr POWER: Indeed. I take that interjection. It is a terrible disease. It is a terrible disease and it is caused by bacterium. We probably have all seen those terrible videos of young children suffering from whooping cough. The major symptom of whooping cough is the characteristic nature of the cough, which is often followed by a whooping sound on inhalation as the child struggles to breath. One in every 200 babies who contract whooping cough will die. The best way to prevent whooping cough is through immunisation.

The member for Murrumba put it perfectly when he said that watching a baby with whooping cough is the best advertisement for immunisation. We rely on herd immunity to protect our children in the first few months of life. We rely on the collective shield that we build together in order to protect our

children. We as Queenslanders have to work together as a collective team in order to protect our young and those who are immune deficient and are unable to be vaccinated. It is so important that we act collectively. Let us see how we are going as a society. The majority of Queenslanders support immunisation and have their children vaccinated. It is fantastic that Queenslanders work collectively and do not take the selfish option to rely on the good work of others. That is validated by the high childhood immunisation rates in Queensland. Vaccination rates for Queensland children indicate that there are 35,000 children aged five and under who may not be fully immunised. These children remain at risk of contracting and transmitting serious life-threatening conditions.

I would like to reflect on the nature of the debate. As we have seen, vaccination is something that this House universally supports. It is also a recognition that sometimes in this House we must take the option to look at the science, to look at the best advice, to look at public and collective health and make a regulation that encourages and then enforces collective action in order to get the greatest result for Queenslanders. For those reasons I commend the bill to the House and encourage all the members to give it their fulsome support. I thank the minister for bringing this bill to the House and the committee for its good work in examining this bill so thoroughly.