




Speech By
Hon. Dr Steven Miles
MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Immunisation

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (10.09 am): Immunisation is easily one of the most significant health advances in history. It is an effective way to protect our youngest Australians from some of the worst diseases. High immunisation rates are important to protect the health of the whole community. The Queensland government's target of 95 per cent coverage by 2020 for children at one, two and five years of age is ambitious but well within our reach. Queensland has already achieved high and increasing childhood immunisation rates. In many places it is higher than the national rates. However, these overall high rates can mask smaller pockets with much lower coverage. This not only leaves individual children at risk; it compromises the herd immunity that is needed to protect immunocompromised people and very young children who cannot be vaccinated.

Parts of the Gold Coast have one of the lowest immunisation rates for one-year-olds in the country, with only 86.2 per cent of children up to date with their vaccinations. Similarly, in the Sunshine Coast hinterland its rate is 87.2 per cent. In comparison the Queensland-wide rate for the same period was 94 per cent, and so we need to do more. Queensland Health clinicians have begun contacting the families of around 3,850 children on the Gold Coast and 3,600 on the Sunshine Coast to check vaccination details and plan with them to deliver the best way to get their children's vaccinations up to date. This may include linking them to a local clinic or immunisation provider, providing them the opportunity to discuss their questions or concerns about vaccination or even an in-home visit. The Palaszczuk government will keep delivering strategies to promote vaccination and protect our children from vaccine preventable diseases.