



Speech By  
**Hon. Dr Steven Miles**


**MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA**

---

Record of Proceedings, 4 September 2018

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

### AIDS

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (10.16 am): Today is World Sexual Health Day. Today I can make the best announcement I could possibly think of for this day, that AIDS has been removed—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Minister, I could not hear your statement. Could you please repeat that statement.

**Dr MILES:** I will, Mr Speaker. Today I can make the best announcement I could possibly think of for World Sexual Health Day, that AIDS has been removed from the notifiable conditions schedule. This is a big step, because it shines a spotlight on significant achievements in the HIV and AIDS battle over the last decade that has led to this change.

The objective of the notifiable conditions schedule is to monitor and respond to diseases that are considered a public health risk because those diseases can spread. HIV remains a public health risk but AIDS does not, which is why we are making changes to remove AIDS from the notifiable conditions schedule. This significant achievement is largely due to highly active antiretroviral treatments for HIV. These treatments were groundbreaking when they were introduced in 1996. They work by lowering the viral load of HIV in the blood to virtually undetectable levels. Research shows that people living with HIV who are on this treatment and maintain an undetectable viral load do not develop AIDS and do not pass HIV on to their partners.

Last year there were just 12 new cases of AIDS reported in Queensland. Compare that to the late 1980s and early 1990s, when there were hundreds of AIDS cases notified each and every year. My friend Phil Carswell, who is here today, says that he remembers the first case, in 1983. As more and more people were diagnosed with HIV and AIDS through the 1980s it must have felt just so overwhelming, and the shocking toll on the LGBTIQ community must have felt devastating. As Phil said to me this morning, spare a thought today for the 11,000 Queenslanders who are not in the world today because of AIDS. Imagine how different the world could have been. It must have been hard to imagine a day like today. To everyone in the gallery from the Queensland AIDS Council and Queensland Positive People and everyone else who has been part of this fight: thank you.

While AIDS is no longer a public health issue I know HIV remains a significant public health risk, with 185 new cases reported in 2017. HIV, like many other STDs, often has no symptoms which is why it is very important for all sexually active people to get regularly tested. The sooner HIV is detected, the sooner treatment can start and the better your chances are of living a long and healthy life.

After years of advocacy, pre-exposure prophylaxis for HIV is now available on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme and, coupled with condoms, continues to provide one of the most effective ways to prevent HIV. The Palaszczuk government made this transition possible by providing prep to up to 3,000 of the most at-risk Queenslanders to show that prep is a feasible, safe and effective method for reducing the risk of HIV. While we acknowledge that there is still work to do, I hope everyone in the gallery today takes this moment to congratulate themselves on this momentous achievement.