




Speech By
Hon. Dr Steven Miles
MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA

Record of Proceedings, 4 February 2020

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Coronavirus, Response

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (9.52 am): I want to start by thanking our health workers who have been on the front line of the response to the fast-spreading novel coronavirus outbreak: the nurses assessing people at our airports; the ambulances transporting people to hospital; our GPs and emergency department staff seeing and testing people; our public health units and the team at the State Health Emergency Coordination Centre; the scientists in our labs who moved so quickly to develop testing capability and who are working around the clock to return tests; and of course our Chief Health Officer, Dr Jeannette Young, and our Queensland Health Director-General, Dr John Wakefield, who have led the Health response here and with their colleagues in other states and territories. Thank you for your calm and professional support for Queenslanders during this time of uncertainty.

The Palaszczuk government is making sure our frontline workers have what they need to keep Queenslanders safe. We still only have two confirmed cases, and those people are receiving the very best possible care at the Gold Coast University Hospital. I am pleased to report that contact tracing for anyone else on that same Tigerair flight TT566 from Melbourne has been completed, with all passengers reporting no symptoms to date. Certain passengers in close proximity to the pair have agreed to self-isolate for a period of 14 days as a precaution. Throughout the country Australia currently has 12 confirmed cases of novel coronavirus, and we are working closely with our state and federal colleagues to share information. Three have now been discharged from hospital in New South Wales. Fever clinics are either operating or ready to be stood up at very short notice at all of our major hospitals. This helps us separate patients who potentially have the virus and other patients presenting to emergency departments with other illnesses or injuries.

This is a new virus and we are doing everything we can to stop its spread. We also want to assure Queenslanders that it is safe to go about their daily lives. Since 22 January more than 471 patients have been tested for the disease in Queensland and more than 400 travellers have been assessed for coronavirus since screening started at Queensland's international airports on Sunday. They have been advised to self-isolate as a precaution. I am pleased to report that all tests returned yesterday were negative for the virus, but we need to do everything we can to keep it that way. That is why we are asking anyone who has travelled to mainland China in the last two weeks to self-isolate until they have returned without symptoms for 14 days. Anyone with any concerns should contact their GP or call 13HEALTH.

It is also why today we will introduce a bill to extend the official coronavirus health emergency order by three months. These laws will ensure health officials can protect Queenslanders from the spread of this new disease. As the Premier said, we have organised a briefing today for all MPs regarding the coronavirus response and these new laws.

I am also proud to say that Queensland expertise has been recognised with a Sunshine Coast doctor chosen to head up the team of medical experts treating Australians repatriated from Wuhan to quarantined accommodation on Christmas Island. Dr Dan Holmes from the Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service will serve as a fine team leader of the AUSMAT mission heading up the specialist team drawn from across Australia. He has been one of our great responders when it comes to delivering medical care where it is needed most. His most recent mission was leading the AUSMAT team into the devastating measles epidemic in Samoa as well as previous health emergencies in the Philippines and Vanuatu.