




Speech By
Hon. Dr Steven Miles
MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Coronavirus

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (9.40 am): I rise to update the House on developments overnight with the novel coronavirus. Australia now has its 13th novel coronavirus case. An eight-year-old boy was diagnosed at the Gold Coast University Hospital last night. Forty-nine other patients who were tested yesterday were negative. I understand that this is the first case of a child with the virus in Australia.

Globally, 20,704 people now have the virus and 427 people have died. We are doing everything we can to keep Queenslanders safe and to limit its spread. The boy had been travelling with the man and woman who were diagnosed with the virus last week, so he was already in quarantine. He will continue to be well looked after at the Gold Coast University Hospital. Contact tracing for anyone else on the same Tiger Airways flight TT566 from Melbourne has already been completed and advice to those passengers remains current.

Today I can also advise the House that we are ramping up coronavirus testing by expanding it to private pathology collection sites to make sure Queenslanders can access testing throughout Queensland. QML and Sullivan Nicolades Pathology are now equipped to collect samples from travellers who have been in China or anyone who might have been in contact with an infected patient. Samples will continue to be tested at Coppers Plains.

Expanding collection points also gives GPs more options: they can choose to collect samples themselves or refer to a collection point. That means that most towns and suburbs in Queensland have somewhere that can take a sample to test for coronavirus. It makes testing more accessible and should allay concerns from GPs. It also means that, if the virus does begin to spread more widely in Queensland or if our health officials decide to expand the cohort to be tested, we will have the collection capability. I want to thank QML and SNP for their cooperation.

Current testing is only effective once a patient has symptoms. There is no current test for those without symptoms. Anyone who has health concerns should call their GP or 13HEALTH. Health officials now advise that anyone who has been in China in the past 14 days and feels unwell should seek medical advice. Again, I want to thank our Chief Health Officer, Dr Jeannette Young, for her tireless efforts to ensure the protection of Queenslanders.