




Speech By
Hon. Dr Steven Miles
MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Coronavirus, Response

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (9.53 am): The health and wellbeing of Queenslanders is our top priority. As I speak this morning, the total number of coronavirus cases is now 71,902 worldwide and the death toll has climbed to 1,775. I want to once again thank every single member of our dedicated frontline staff who has been involved in the health response to the novel coronavirus outbreak. The streamlined response from our doctors, nurses, GPs, ED staff and public health units is a testament to the dedication our frontline health staff have to Queenslanders and to keeping them safe.

A total of 38 Queenslanders who were evacuated from Wuhan and have been in quarantine on Christmas Island are due to arrive home in Queensland by tomorrow. Some began arriving yesterday. The Chief Health Officer has sent them a message on behalf of the government to welcome them home to Queensland and thank them for their cooperation. I am sure everyone in this House shares those sentiments. The letter also confirms that they can return to usual activities and provides contact details for support should it be required.

The Palaszczuk government is making sure that our frontline workers are supported and have what they need to continue their great work. We are continuing to work with all levels of government, industry and the community to respond to the threat of coronavirus. Last month the novel coronavirus was declared a public health event of statewide significance which gave Queensland's Chief Health Officer extra powers to manage the situation. The government has amended the Public Health Act to extend that declaration from seven days to 90 days to ensure that this health event continues to be managed effectively.

As of yesterday, we have screened around 3,000 people at Queensland's three international airports and 1,425 people are self-isolating in the state right now. Fewer than 10 people have been taken to hospital for testing after being screened at the airport. I am pleased to report that none of those have tested positive. We are grateful for the cooperation we have received from travellers and we have had no issues with people not complying with the notices.

To ensure our home isolators are feeling well and have the support they need, Queensland Health has teamed up with the Australian Red Cross and the Queensland Police Service to check in on them during their 14-day isolation period. Both the Red Cross and 13HEALTH are regularly contacting them by phone and QPS is assisting with home visits, which Queensland Health is also conducting. So far, 13HEALTH and the Red Cross have made nearly 3,800 calls and our scientists have tested over 1,200 samples.

Our hospitals are well prepared should the impact of coronavirus in Queensland increase in the future. Our hospitals have sufficient levels of stockpiled PPE available to hospital and health services, with more available to be ordered should the need arise.