




Speech By
Hon. Dr Steven Miles
MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA

Record of Proceedings, 22 April 2020

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Coronavirus, Update

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (9.58 am): Today marks day 84 since COVID-19 hit Queensland's shores. The life of every single Queenslanders is precious. Our No. 1 objective since that day has been to save as many Queensland lives as possible. Since then, 1,024 Queenslanders have fallen ill with COVID-19 and sadly six have lost their lives. The deaths of six Queenslanders is tragic, but if it were not for all of our efforts the toll could have been so much greater. Globally, 2½ million people have contracted the disease and 176,323 people have died—many in countries we often compare ourselves to, like the UK and the United States. Personally, I find those scenes from places like New York truly horrifying. Early modelling suggested the same could happen here. We refused to see that as inevitable, refused to accept that thousands had to die. That was a decision we made; it was not a matter of luck.

Overnight, no new positive cases of COVID-19 were confirmed in Queensland. We started testing early and we have kept testing levels high. To date, more than 90,168 tests have been conducted and fever clinics have been established right throughout the state. The Palaszczuk government has taken the COVID-19 pandemic seriously since day one, and we will continue to make the health and lives of Queenslanders our top priority.

This virus could be our biggest test. Make no mistake: here in Queensland our early action, planning and preparing for this pandemic has put us in a better position than just about anywhere in the world and it has saved lives. Last month, we announced \$1.2 billion to ensure our hospitals are prepared for this pandemic. This investment included doubling intensive care and tripling emergency department capacity, increasing our PPE stockpiles and employing more frontline staff. We purchased an additional 110 ventilators and brought forward a \$25 million order of medicines, gloves and masks. We also announced an additional \$28 million to support non-government organisations delivering critical mental health, drug and alcohol services across the state. We set up fever clinics at every hospital and health service from the cape to the Gold Coast, and we are testing at an incredible rate. On Friday, for instance, Queensland did half of all tests conducted in Australia.

It is clear these efforts are working. We have just 280 active cases, we have increased capacity and we are keeping the number of daily new cases low. I would like to thank every single Queenslanders who has done the right thing and stayed home. Queenslanders have made significant sacrifices when it comes to the way they live and work. Our frontline health workers—the nurses, doctors, paramedics, scientists and pathology staff, allied health workers and everyone supporting them—have been doing an amazing job in unprecedented circumstances. They are the true heroes of the COVID-19 story. Unfortunately, the story is far from over. We all need to keep doing our part—keep our distance, stay home when we can and especially when we are sick, get tested if we have symptoms, wash our hands regularly and, most importantly, take care of each other, especially the elderly, the sick and the vulnerable.