




Speech By
Hon. Dr Steven Miles
MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

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 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (9.46 am): I am pleased to report to the House that today is another day of zero new coronavirus cases in Queensland. Zero days are always great days. Today the number of patients in an intensive care unit in Queensland hospitals has also changed to zero. After almost three months in ICU with COVID-19 related pneumonia, an 81-year-old man was yesterday moved out of intensive care and into another ward at Gold Coast University Hospital. I can only imagine how incredibly difficult a journey these months would have been for the man and his family. I thank staff at the Gold Coast University Hospital for their hard work and dedication. I am told they celebrated with a small morning tea yesterday.

As the Premier announced, we can now ease restrictions on aged-care facilities, giving our older Queenslanders the chance to see their grandkids. I know that will mean a lot to many families across the state. Today I can also announce that last night the AHPPC updated its advice for boarding schools and school based residential colleges. Schools are still required to plan and manage the risk posed by COVID-19 to ensure their students are safe; however, if it is safe to do so, all students can return for term 3.

We have also been working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to safely ease restrictions in remote communities. It has been a significant focus of this government to improve access to health care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders. Last year we appointed our very first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Chief Health Officer. Haylene Grogan has been doing an incredible job working directly with our Indigenous communities and ensuring they are getting the health services they need, especially now with COVID-19. We have been able to prevent its spread into our Indigenous communities where we know it would do the worst damage and we have largely kept it out of our rural areas as well. To date we have had just nine Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander confirmed COVID-19 cases in Queensland—the majority in South-East Queensland—and no known cases in remote or discrete Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander communities. We have invested more than \$21 million to support the health and wellbeing of First Nation Queenslanders. This funding is bolstering the frontline health workforce to help people remain connected and continue their health care during this time and enable an enhanced surge workforce capacity to respond to community outbreaks.

I am pleased to inform the House that, as of last Friday, travel restrictions for Queensland's remote and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities were eased further, making it easier for residents to travel around their districts. People who have been outside of those communities during lockdown can start to return. I thank those communities, including the local leaders and community advocates, who worked closely with us to transition from federal emergency biosecurity restrictions to flexible state based arrangements under the Queensland Chief Health Officer's public health directions.