




Speech By  
**Hon. Dr Steven Miles**  
**MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA**

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Record of Proceedings, 15 July 2020

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Coronavirus, Health Update

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (9.45 am): This morning I can update the House that 18 people have now come forward to say they visited the Crossroads Hotel in Casula. They have all been tested for COVID-19. I thank them for coming forward. Fourteen of those tests are now back and they are all, thankfully, negative. We are asking anyone who had been to that pub between 3 and 10 July to please come forward and get tested. It is highly likely that more than those 18 Queenslanders attended that pub in that week and we need them to get tested.

I am also pleased to report that Queenslanders are heeding the testing message. Some 6,778 Queenslanders were tested in the last 24-hour reporting period. That is a daily record for Queensland. All of them were negative. I would like to thank those 6,778 Queenslanders as well as our fantastic pathology and scientific services staff in both the public and private pathology sectors.

Like all states and territories, Queensland suspended non-urgent surgeries in line with the Prime Minister's March announcement in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In doing so, we were planning for a worst-case scenario—that is, one where our hospital systems would be overwhelmed just like many throughout the world. Thankfully, this has not become a reality in Queensland so far. All Queenslanders deserve credit for flattening the curve.

Now we can get on with Queensland's plan to unite and recover. Just as we want more Queenslanders back at work and more businesses open, we also want our doctors and nurses treating patients—doing what they do best—and our operating theatres open and busy. Thanks to their efforts, we were able to reintroduce non-urgent elective surgeries in late April—sooner than expected—with elective surgeries now routinely back to normal capacity.

Last month we announced a quarter of a billion dollars in extra elective surgery. This will mean hospitals can now provide non-urgent procedures outside of regular hours to get back to pre COVID-19 levels of elective surgery. This enhanced capacity will allow us to work through the backlog and continue to meet the clinically recommended time frames—that is, 90 days for category 2 procedures and 365 days for category 3 procedures. That means more people will be able to get their surgeries sooner.

We are already starting to see improvements to the backlog. In Mackay, Cairns and Townsville, 1,100, 2,500 and 700 patients respectively will benefit from the Queensland government's elective surgery blitz. The investment will require us to expand over and beyond our usual levels of activity. It will support operating lists outside of normal hours and through weekends to catch up.

Queensland Health is providing a record number of surgeries to Queenslanders who need them every year. Queenslanders are increasingly choosing our world-class public health system. Even with this relatively short suspension of surgeries, we predict 7,000 people may go past the clinically recommended time frame. At the same time last year, just 122 were waiting longer than those targets. Queenslanders delivered for us throughout this pandemic and now it is Queensland Health's turn to deliver for them.