




Speech By
Hon. Dr Steven Miles
MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA

Record of Proceedings, 10 September 2020

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Coronavirus, Health Update

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (9.46 am): When you are a health minister during a pandemic, I can assure you that zero days are the very best days—and today is a ‘zero new cases of COVID-19 in Queensland’ day. This morning I am proud to report that we recorded our one millionth test for this disease. That is a remarkable achievement. It took almost six months to reach 500,000 tests but only took six weeks for us to double that and reach the magic million mark.

Many Queenslanders have risen to the challenge of this pandemic. We have seen unbelievable support from members of the community, whether that is keeping us safe by staying home and getting tested or even joining our Care Army to care for vulnerable Queenslanders. But our best line of defence has always been our hardworking healthcare workers. They have put themselves between us and this deadly disease. They have done incredible amounts of testing and cared for Queenslanders who became ill. Their outstanding work is the reason we have prevented much greater devastation in our state.

I have the great privilege of meeting and talking with our healthcare workers every single day. Right across the state I have seen firsthand the dedication and commitment they have to keeping their communities safe. I have also seen the frustrations, the exhaustion, the weight of this, frankly, scary task, but I know Queenslanders appreciate all that they have done for us. They know that if it was not for our healthcare workers on the front line we may well be in the same position as the United States or Italy, with devastating first waves and even worse second and even third waves of infections, destroying people’s health and their livelihoods, overwhelming their health systems and devastating their economies. Our strong health response is the only reason we are in a position now to get on with our plan for economic recovery. The foundation of our plan to get people back to work and businesses open again is our health response.

I want to thank our Chief Health Officer, Dr Jeannette Young, for her tireless efforts this year to keep Queenslanders safe. I also want to thank all of the staff in all of the teams that have supported her. Just recently we added a specialist healthcare unit to assist people with medical transfers. Queensland’s Specialist COVID-19 Health Care Support Service has so far fielded over 423 calls. They are helping to coordinate the care of the almost 1,000 interstate patients our hospitals treat every single week.

To show our appreciation for the amazing work of our health heroes I am pleased to announce that the Queensland government will celebrate their efforts with a special Health Heroes Week. I am also pleased to announce that, as part of Health Heroes Week, Queensland health workers will get two days COVID pandemic recognition leave. This is for our hardworking doctors, nurses, public health teams, ambos, pathology workers and health professionals and the support staff who help them do their jobs like cleaners and kitchen staff so they can spend two extra days with their families after such a busy year.

We will invite Queenslanders to say thank you to our health heroes across a dedicated week of celebrations for their efforts. The Queensland government will organise events and activities so every Queenslander can participate in thanking our health heroes. I would urge all members to participate and encourage their communities to get involved too.

Finally, today is R U OK?Day and I would urge all members to take just a few minutes to check in on someone they might be concerned about.