




Speech By
Hon. Yvette D'Ath

MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Coronavirus

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (2.11 pm): It is a pleasure to have the opportunity to speak in the Queensland parliament today. Just to reflect on how far we have come in such a short period of time, when we all celebrated Christmas and New Year's Eve I do not think any one of us would have expected to be where we are today, facing not only a state, not only a national, but an international pandemic—something that every country in the world is grappling with. Sadly, some of those countries have not managed the situation well at all. When one sees mass graves being dug and timber boxes being put in the ground, thousands of people dying in First World countries such as the US, the United Kingdom, Spain and Italy and we see numbers of cases going up in Singapore, Korea and Japan it is so real and so disturbing. The reality is that in Queensland we are doing so well. It is not by luck that we have got to this point, it is by hard work and professionalism; it is by leading from the front and making decisions quickly.

Queensland was the first to put in place the public health emergency order. On 29 January, the same day the first case was confirmed, we put that order in place on the advice of the Chief Health Officer. We did not say that it was an over-exaggeration or a beat-up. We saw what was coming. The Chief Health Officer has been planning for this every day that she has been in that role. She has been planning for 'what happens if' and looking at examples of what has happened around the world with other coronaviruses. We have world-leading professionals who know how to deal with communicable diseases and they were able to get their contact tracing units up and running immediately.

That day, 29 January, our contact tracing started. We led the way in this country. Other states have turned to Queensland to ask to use our training modules for contact tracing. We have kept that contact tracing up. We have heard from the Prime Minister that it is critical: contact tracing is No. 1. We must identify people who are positive and must trace every person they have been in contact with and put those people into quarantine. That is how you control this virus and that is what Queensland is doing. Queensland has a government that has listened to every piece of health advice and has acted on that advice, as we did with the local government election—we will hear from the member for Sandgate in relation to that—and as we have done for everything we are doing. I acknowledge the leadership of the Premier, Annastacia Palaszczuk. I could not be more proud to be part of this Palaszczuk government that has listened and acted decisively and led the way in Australia and internationally.

The Leader of the Opposition spoke about leading on the road to recovery. We need to be looking forward to the recovery of Queensland, but in doing so we need to be very careful. The message is that we have done very well up until today, but things can turn and things can turn very quickly if we seek to change the levers too soon and not act on advice. If we do not keep this under control—if we do not control our borders, if we do not keep up the contact tracing, if we do not have people in quarantine and we are not managing what is happening here in Queensland—we can still end up where those other

countries are. Every single decision counts. The Premier represents us proudly on the national cabinet. The national cabinet is very important, with all premiers and the Prime Minister in the room together, acting on the advice of chief health officers right across the country, making decisions in the best interests of all Australians. That consistent message across the country, that support, that recognition, that genuine discussion in that room, is critical and I acknowledge all of the leaders involved and ask all Queenslanders to please stick with us and continue to support the advice.