




Speech By
Hon. Yvette D'Ath

MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

State General Election

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (9.56 am): We have smashed the COVID-19 curve, but we are not out of the woods yet. That is why the Palaszczuk government is making it easier for Queenslanders to vote safely at the state general election in October. Today I announce the release of the Palaszczuk government's statement of principles governing the conduct of the COVID-safe Queensland general election, which I electronically table.

Tabled paper. Document titled 'Statement of principles governing the conduct of the COVID-19 Queensland General Election' [\[910\]](#).

That means more pre-poll locations, longer pre-poll hours and more pre-poll voting days in the two weeks prior to polling day. That means every effort is being made to provide a safe election-day stand-up vote where Queenslanders can proudly attend their normal school or community hall to safely cast a ballot in person. It means Queensland will have an election period, not just an election day.

After the fantastic work that we have done together as a community, Queenslanders deserve nothing less. We will ensure that the ECQ has the capacity to accept telephone votes from vulnerable voters. While Queensland has smashed the curve on COVID-19, we need to be vigilant and prepared for any eventuality. We will be providing the ECQ with the resources to respond to an emergent public health risk. In extreme circumstances such as a localised outbreak this could include the ECQ delivering the election to some electorates as a total postal vote. Of course, any steps taken by the government or the ECQ will be taken in consultation with our respected Chief Health Officer.

These principles build upon the great success of the 2020 local government election and Bundamba and Currumbin by-elections. Despite the World Health Organization declaration of a global pandemic a mere five days before the commencement of pre-poll voting for the local government election and the Bundamba and Currumbin by-elections, the Palaszczuk government was able to provide a framework in accordance with the health advice for the ECQ to provide a COVID-safe election, and that is what it was: it was a COVID-safe election. There were no cases of COVID-19 linked to the election.

For that election, the Palaszczuk government gave the ECQ the tools to facilitate more than 2.5 million votes across the state with more than one million of those votes occurring at pre-poll, almost double postal voting numbers from the last local government election with 570,000 postal votes being cast; significant increases in pre-polling capacity, including weekend pre-poll voting, and an increase in the telephone voting staff from 16 at the start of early voting to 162 staff, delivering 37,000 telephone votes as opposed to the 5,000 that were planned pre COVID; and employing approximately 4,000 additional staff in the last two weeks of the election period to enforce strong social distancing and personal hygiene measures.

The ECQ has since been contacted by election officials in New Zealand, Canada and also across Australia to share details of the successful delivery of the local government election model in a COVID environment. The Palaszczuk government has put Queensland in the best position to unite and recover

for October and beyond. We are a government with a plan to adapt and ensure the safety of Queenslanders should the need arise, and that is what we are doing in establishing our statement of principles for the upcoming general election.