




Speech By
Ann Leahy

MEMBER FOR WARREGO

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MOTION

Coronavirus, Vaccination Mandate

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (4.41 pm): I am vaccinated. I want everyone in rural and regional Queensland to have easy access to the vaccine so that they, too, can get vaccinated. I support healthcare workers following the advice from the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee in making sure they are vaccinated. It is a condition of employment to be vaccinated as is the case with many other vaccines for those who work in health.

Vaccination has to be above politics. Members opposite should stop the cheap political stunts and instead get on with the job of promoting the vaccine and helping people in rural and regional Queensland get access to the vaccine. Let's get the vaccine into the arms of Queenslanders. That is the real problem this government is not addressing.

If the vaccine is accessible to healthcare workers and community members, they will go and get vaccinated. We have seen that in the community of Dalby, where 200 people a day would go into the pop-up clinics. The Labor government has stalled on access for political purposes. Unfortunately, it has been like pulling teeth from this Labor government to get pop-up vaccination clinics across the Western Downs. The Western Downs double-dose rate is 51 per cent. It is below the state average. I have fought for months for Dalby, Tara, Condamine, Meandarra, Moonie, Chinchilla and Miles to have more COVID vaccine clinics.

If the government wants to get vaccines out of the fridge and into the arms of health workers and community members, it should give them better access. We do not all live in the south-east corner or on the coast. Why was the Queensland Labor government slow to start with offering vaccinations at Bunnings? New South Wales and Victoria have been offering vaccinations at Bunnings since August. This Labor government was three months behind the other states.

The delays and reduced access are all about playing politics with vaccination rather than using vaccination as a path out of the pandemic. How does this Labor government expect healthcare workers and the vulnerable to get vaccinated when they just cannot get access in those local communities, especially those communities where there is no chemist or doctor such as Meandarra, Condamine or Moonie? There are numerous other communities in the same situation right across Queensland. Meandarra, Condamine and Moonie are still waiting for their pop-up clinics. This Labor government is creating vaccine hesitancy and delaying and slowing vaccine access to communities for people who want to get vaccinated.

Queensland has one of the lowest rates of vaccination in the country. It is a shame that the Labor government is making this a political issue in a pandemic. Given the unions, including the AWU, QTU and QNMU, have expressed their opposition—

(Time expired)