




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON

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MOTION

Coronavirus, Vaccination Mandate

 **Mr O'ROURKE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (4.14 pm): We have been following the health advice that has kept us safe. There has been a pandemic that saw us prepare for the worst. Millions of people have lost their lives. Health systems around the world have been pushed beyond the brink. There has been no handbook, no manual and no guide, but we took the advice of health and medical professionals and it has kept us safe.

Now we have a vaccine that is safe and effective and we need Queenslanders to get it now. Vaccination saves lives; it is the pathway out of the pandemic. It beggars belief that the opposition again fails to recognise that Queensland's success is because Queenslanders have followed the health advice. It is only sensible that those caring for our most vulnerable in our health and hospital systems are vaccinated too. That is what the health advice says. The World Health Organization has said the backbone of every health system is the workforce, the people who deliver health services.

The pandemic is a powerful demonstration of just how much we rely on our health workers and how vulnerable we all are when the people who protect our health are themselves unprotected. We have all read the stories of the thousands of health workers around the world who have died because of COVID. As the parent of a frontline health worker, it puts me at ease that my son Harry and those working with him are fully vaccinated. Why does the opposition continue to dance around this issue? Do they support the health advice making vaccinations a requirement for those caring for the sick and frail as recommended by the AHPPC, or do they wish to pursue their own political agenda based on their political opinion?

Who is really pulling the strings here? Is it the so-called union that the member for Mudgeeraba is beholden to, the one that is actively undermining the AHPPC's recommendations for health workers by mounting an active challenge in the courts? I despair that the person nominated by the opposition to be their spokesperson on health refuses to say whether she backs the health advice or if she is just being wishy-washy because it is politically convenient for her so-called union. I back the medical experts, I back our Chief Health Officer and I back the AHPPC—not the member for Mudgeeraba and her keyboard companions.