



Speech By  
**Dale Last**


**MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN**

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Record of Proceedings, 27 October 2021

**MOTION**

**Coronavirus, Vaccination Mandate**

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (4.47 pm): I rise to speak to the motion moved by the Minister for Health. I will be voting in favour of this motion because, regardless of what anyone says, I actually believe in vaccination. I am fully vaccinated and I support the mandatory vaccination of workers in the Queensland healthcare system as a condition of employment, as recommended by the AHPPC. What we are seeing here today is a diversion from the real issue in my area and in rural and regional Queensland more broadly in terms of low vaccinations.

**Mr Harper:** What are you doing about it?

**Mr LAST:** I will come to that. Let's look at Townsville University Hospital, the largest hospital in North Queensland. Six additional ventilators were put into that hospital over the past 18 months. Now there are real concerns that our hospitals in rural and regional Queensland will not be able to cope in the coming months if there is an outbreak of COVID-19. That is a genuine concern given what has happened in other parts of Australia and, indeed, the world.

It comes down to communication, resources and the will in providing vaccine accessibility for all residents, regardless of where they live. There is no Bunnings in the Burdekin electorate. There are no free sausages in my electorate.

If someone in the Burdekin electorate wants to get the vaccine, they have to be prepared to drive. What if they are 80 years of age and live in Middlemount or one of those areas out there? I received a text message not 10 minutes ago from a worker on a cattle property out at Middlemount saying that it would be a four-hour round trip per vaccine—two four-hour round trips to go and get their vaccine. The rollout of the vaccine in those areas has left a lot to be desired, particularly when it comes to communication, because quite often the first time people know that a vaccine clinic is in town is when they drive past the pop-up clinic.

**Mr Harper** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Thuringowa, you are warned under the standing orders.

**Mr LAST:** Just because people live in the bush should not mean that they have to put up with a lack of accessibility for something like a vaccine. I have a real concern that our healthcare system will not be able to cope if we have a large-scale outbreak of COVID in rural and regional Queensland. I have a real concern that our Indigenous communities are going to be exposed if we have an outbreak when the borders reopen and I do not know how our health system will cope with that, particularly in those rural and regional areas.

**Ms Leahy:** They'll be locked down.

**Mr LAST:** We now face the very real prospect of being in lockdown over Christmas, and I will stand up in this place on each and every occasion to fight for equality of services in health care because those of us who live in the bush deserve that in the same way that those who live in the south-east corner have it.

*(Time expired)*