




Speech By
David Crisafulli

MEMBER FOR BROADWATER

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PUBLIC HEALTH AND OTHER LEGISLATION (FURTHER EXTENSION OF EXPIRING PROVISIONS) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.23 am): The opposition will be supporting this bill. Before I talk about the amendments moved by the shadow health minister I say that we must give this serious consideration and we must give the community the confidence they need. This is a bill that will impact every family and every small and family business, and ensuring that these powers are in place is something that the community needs to see. Things have changed immensely since this bill was first debated. As such, we owe it to our communities to show that we are going to adapt to that change.

The amendments that the shadow health minister is proposing are sensible because they allow for that adaptation. No-one is suggesting for one moment that we are not living in uncertain times. No-one is suggesting for one moment that things will not continue to evolve, but the pandemic politics and the scaremongering and the fear have to stop. What this bill does and what the proposed amendments do is chart a course out of that—hope over fear; confidence over chaos; a pathway out of the pandemic. That is what our communities want.

We see the childish behaviour today and hear comments made about people wanting to see the virus enter Queensland. There is not one Queenslanders who wants to see that. Queenslanders want hope. They want to know that at the end of their sacrifice lies opportunities for them and for their family. The undermining this week has done nothing to give them that hope. The Premier standing up yesterday and making up her own health advice on the run and then doubling down today and running a scare campaign does not give hope. Having a policy position that prioritises sporting families over Queensland families coming home does not give hope. The pathway out is through confidence in the vaccines. That is what we have consistently said from day one. All of the undermining and all of the mixed messaging does nothing to give that confidence.

There are three reasons the amendments proposed by the shadow health minister make sense. In the uncertain times we are experiencing it is appropriate that we extend the health powers. It is vital that health advice be made available to the public to assist with clarity of the message. As parliamentarians it is our obligation to continually review laws that have such an impact on the lives of Queenslanders. That is simply what is proposed.

The opposition agrees with the need to extend the powers of the Chief Health Officer. With the government falling behind the other states on vaccination rates, we believe that it is appropriate for these powers to remain. In extending these powers, the government will have time to address some of the vaccination hesitancy caused by their mixed messaging and the Premier's derogatory comments about the AstraZeneca vaccine. The opposition believes that, despite the government's confusing language around vaccines, December should be enough time for the vaccination rate to reach the levels we need it to.

Let me make it clear on the second point that we are advocating for amendments that make expert health advice the central theme of this legislation. In fact, our amendments seek to elevate the importance of expert health advice by mandating its publication. We see this amendment as crucial to breaking through the political spin and confusion by having a single point of truth. By mandating the release of the health advice, we will not see the shambolic performances that we have witnessed and the sudden, drastic changes to policy.

Finally, on the third point, these powers are extraordinary powers enacted to deal with an extraordinary situation. As parliamentarians we have a responsibility to constantly review these powers, and that is all we are asking. While we must ensure the safety of Queenslanders, we must also ensure that we do not hold on to them any longer than we need to. These amendments are a measured response from the opposition that respects and promotes the health advice, respects the rights of Queenslanders and, most importantly, keeps Queenslanders safe.