




Speech By
Deb Frecklington

MEMBER FOR NANANGO

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ADJOURNMENT

Uncle Bevan Costello; Coronavirus, Vaccination

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (9.09 pm): I rise tonight with the sad news of the passing of Uncle Bevan Costello, a proud Wakka Wakka man. The Cherbourg council made the announcement about the respected elder, mentor and champion and said that his voice was heard far and wide and that it is a tragic loss for us all. My husband, Jason, wrote—

I will always remember the guidance and support you gave me during my time at Cherbourg and the chats we had. The community will miss you greatly. Deb and I pass on our deepest condolences to your family and friends. You will not be forgotten.

Uncle Bevan Costello is one of those people that everyone who met remembered. I pass on my gratitude for what Uncle Bevan has done for our community. I know that Uncle Bevan will be remembered with absolute fondness by so many people across Queensland—not only in Cherbourg, Murgon and the South Burnett district but across the wider Indigenous community across Queensland. May you rest in peace, Uncle Bevan.

I want to put on record the absolute debacle in relation to the vaccines within my Nanango electorate. In early June I was contacted by the Swickers Bacon Factory in Kingaroy in relation to their access to vaccines for their workforce. Swickers is the largest pork processor in the Southern Hemisphere, with 800 staff on site. We know that meat processing workers are in the priority 1b group. It is essential that they have access to the vaccine to ensure COVID-19 does not enter this vital food sector.

I have written to the health minister. I have written to the Premier on three separate occasions from June to August talking about this request. Swickers themselves put in multiple requests to Queensland Health, but ultimately no hub was provided. On 23 August, when the Premier announced that meatwork employees would be offered a chance to get vaccinated, Swickers heard nothing—crickets, not on the list. They were finally offered a one-day hub just yesterday. It was only one day, however, as Swickers were told by the government representatives that it would not be worth their while to provide a hub unless 150 people would be available each day.

This is a government which carry on when it suits them to support this vital industry, but then when it actually comes to the crunch it is not happening. I put to the government: do what you say you are going to do and support the meatworkers.