



Speech By
Hon. Glenn Butcher

MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Coronavirus, Vaccination

 **Hon. GJ BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing and Minister for Water) (10.06 am): Getting vaccinated is the best way to drive Queensland's economic recovery and reunite our families for Christmas. That was certainly the message at the regional forums held last week—one of which was held in Gladstone. Leaders from government, community and industry came together to reinforce the message that the vaccines are safe, effective and our best defence against COVID-19. Industry leaders in Gladstone took the opportunity to talk to our government about the way forward as we reopen our borders. We are all united in Central Queensland. The only way to stop an influx of COVID coming into our hospitals, workplaces and homes is to get the jab. We need to come together to protect our families, friends and communities.

In Central Queensland we are on the right track, but there is certainly more to do. In Gladstone the rate has jumped significantly. That is great to hear. Some 84.9 per cent of people in Gladstone have had their first dose and 69.4 per cent have now had their second dose. We cannot be complacent. COVID is on our doorstep and we know that it will search out the unvaccinated. We must continue to turn out for our first and second doses and our booster shots when they are available.

I was thrilled to visit the Rockhampton vaccination hub on Tuesday last week to announce a huge milestone—100,000 doses delivered through the Central Queensland Health and Hospital Service, for a total of 232,000 doses delivered right across the HHS, GPs and our wonderful local pharmacies in regional Queensland. This is massive for Central Queensland and it means the majority of people are coming together to protect each other, our economy and their jobs. It is clear that our community wants to do the right thing and is ignoring the fake news spread by a very vocal minority.

In Gladstone, Rio Tinto have had over 900 workers take up the opportunity to get the jab at work with onsite vaccination programs at the QAL, Yarwun and BSL operations. Even better than that, they are also inviting families to come in and get the jab with their working partners.

I am pleased to advise the House that Rio Tinto will be holding more vaccination clinics at sites over the next two weeks. The Palaszczuk government is proud to be working with industry and with businesses to make sure that Queenslanders are protected.