




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MOUNT OMMANEY

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

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (6.50 pm): I rise to speak in support of the bill before the House. Last time we were speaking about the need to extend provisions, I remember I was hoping to see my grandparents. We were talking about a travel bubble and things were looking up. We were really excited about the idea of being able to go to New Zealand to see Nan and Pop, who missed my wedding last year. Six months later, things have deteriorated. Large parts of Australia are gripped by an outbreak. Most of the eastern seaboard is now in lockdown. It has been for some time and will be for some time to come. My sister lives in northern New South Wales and I have not seen her or my nieces for months. They have barely had a chance to meet my baby daughter. Sadly, the idea of seeing my grandparents in New Zealand seems a really long way off. I know that I am not alone. There are many people in Queensland and indeed right around Australia missing family interstate and overseas. We are a nation of migrants. My beautiful little nieces are missing their grandparents up here in Queensland, and we are missing them too.

Parts of New South Wales have been locked down for months. There is no end in sight to that but, thanks to the strong management of our Chief Health Officer and our government, we are blessedly living delta free in Queensland and are in the race of our lives to get vaccinated. The feedback I am getting from my community now is that they are being offered appointments to get those jabs and that they are excited to have the opportunity to do their part in getting that jab. I say again to my community tonight, as I have always said: if you have not yet registered online with Queensland Health, do not delay. Do it today. Get registered and get vaccinated. My personal experience a couple of weeks ago was fantastic in getting vaccinated at a Queensland Health hub. They did a wonderful job. I felt really well looked after. I thank the Queensland Health team that did such a great job taking care of me and thousands of others who were vaccinated at the hub that day.

It is my hope that every eligible Queenslander will have the chance to get vaccinated, especially our young people. My daughter Allegra is an amazing young woman. She is in year 7 and celebrated her 12th birthday just a couple of weeks ago. She wears her mask to school and is now eligible to register for the Pfizer vaccine. She deserves the chance to be protected before we open the border. Every kid does. My son, Heath, is nine. He is not eligible to register for a vaccine, but he is a smart kid and he sees his sister wearing her mask to school, so he decided that he was going to do that, too. It is not because he has to but because he knows it is a smart thing to do. It increases his protection. He wants to do it. He knows it is the best way to keep himself safe and keep his teachers safe. I am really proud of him for making that decision. Heath spent time in the neonatal intensive care unit as a newborn baby. I can say from experience that seeing your kid in hospital is not an experience any parent wants to have or repeat.

Our lives have changed in many ways since the start of COVID, particularly with the advent of the delta variant. One of the biggest changes has been the introduction of the check-in app, which has provided an easy way for contact tracers to track us down quickly so they can get on top of these

outbreaks. It is due to innovations like this check-in app that we were able to, in just eight days, amazingly and miraculously, get on top of the recent Indooroopilly cluster, which affected a lot of people in my community. When I think about what is going on in other parts of Australia right now, it absolutely blows my mind that the Queensland community came together like it did. We had tens of thousands of people in home quarantine and in lockdown. I thank the people in my community and beyond who did the hard work. Some of them were locked down for well over two weeks, but they did it because they knew it was the right thing to do. Because of those people who stayed home, here we all are today in parliament. Sure, we are wearing masks, but we are here.

I mentioned in April that I had a friend who came back from the UK and stayed in the Howard Springs quarantine facility. She said that it was absolutely fantastic. She said to me at the time, 'Gee, it would be great if Queensland could get one of those.' Well, I have good news: we have one coming. We have our very own Howard Springs variant—the Wellcamp facility, which is absolutely fantastic. Hotels were never meant to be a long-term solution. They were a short-term solution to what has turned out to be a long-term problem. When you know what you know, you do what you can do. We know better; we can do better. Let's get this quarantine going. I commend the bill to the House.