



Speech By  
**Hon. Leeanne Enoch**


**MEMBER FOR ALGESTER**

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Record of Proceedings, 27 October 2021

**MOTION**

**Coronavirus, Vaccination Mandate**

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algester—ALP) (Minister for Communities and Housing, Minister for Digital Economy and Minister for the Arts) (4.26 pm): I rise to support the motion. We know statistically that, sadly, First Nations Queenslanders continue to be over-represented on almost every health indicator, and our reliance on health services is directly linked to that fact. Whether it be Queensland Health services, community managed health services or independently run not-for-profit services that provide outreach to our communities across the state, First Nations communities and families can have multiple interactions with health professionals in any given week. With vaccination rates lagging in too many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities—thanks to the federal LNP government’s total failure to fulfil their responsibilities to roll out the vaccine across Indigenous communities, as was their responsibility—the risk is even higher.

Throughout the pandemic we have kept Queenslanders safe by following the health advice. Whilst our vaccine plan to unite families and protect Queenslanders sets out our pathway to opening our borders in a cautious, measured manner, we have to accept that the dangerous delta variant will eventually come to Queensland and it will find a way to infect unvaccinated Queenslanders—which is why vaccinations are so very important.

The thing that worries me the most about the virus and its potential impact on Indigenous communities is the vulnerability of our elders and cultural leaders. Our elders are the most valued treasures of our communities and of our state. Our elders are the precious libraries of our communities. They represent every history book never written. They are the custodians of every ancient story that encapsulates the cultural identity of their people and ultimately our state. They hold the knowledge of our past in a way that allows us to understand our place in the world. Our elders are equally the cultural compass of our future. They map the course for healing and progress in our communities and for many First Nations people they are the touchstone that grounds us in a world of multiple challenges.

We cannot risk losing even a small proportion of this cultural leadership simply because of something we read on Facebook or because of the inability of the LNP to back mandatory vaccinations for health professionals. The loss of eldership would have intergenerational impact that for some would be incredibly difficult on so many levels to recover from.

From George Christensen, who has challenged the AHPPC advice on mandating the COVID vaccine for health workers, to NPAQ, which have questioned the science of the vaccines, this classic anti-vaxxer approach only serves to put First Nations people at even greater risk. The member for Mudgeeraba is a member of NPAQ and until this motion could not even give a simple yes/no answer on whether she supports the health worker vaccine mandate. The leader of the opposition, the member for Broadwater, could not give a straight answer until today either. If the LNP do not support this motion, if they do not actively repel the likes of George Christensen and NPAQ, they are putting Indigenous people, our cultural leadership and future generations at risk.