




Speech By
Hon. Mark Bailey

MEMBER FOR MILLER

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Mackay, Road Death; Coronavirus, Vaccination

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (10.00 am): Sadly, I have the duty to report to the House that a fatality has occurred of a traffic control worker on the Mackay Northern Access Upgrade project this morning. The 35-year-old traffic controller was simply doing his job when the tragedy occurred. I have been informed by the Department of Transport and Main Roads and the Queensland Police Service that a full investigation into the incident is underway. I am sure I speak for the whole chamber in offering our sincerest condolences to the man's family and friends at this difficult time.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

Mr BAILEY: The Queensland border has faced and continues to face the ultimate test—a massive COVID outbreak right on our doorstep in our neighbouring state. As COVID cases spiked in New South Wales, the Palaszczuk Labor government made tough decisions to protect Queenslanders. Even with these strong measures, COVID found a way in through some truck drivers just doing their job to keep our state supplied, being some of the few workers who regularly cross our interstate borders, putting them in a higher risk category.

We stepped up our response. The freight industry was one of the first in Queensland to comply with COVID vaccination rules. From 15 October this year, all truckies entering Queensland had to have at least one jab and a negative COVID test within the previous seven days. What an outstanding response we have had from the freight sector! Working with the industry, including Queensland Trucking Association CEO Gary Mahon and his team, the Palaszczuk Labor government set up two specific truckie vaccine hubs, at Tugun and Goondiwindi. Here, truckies who do irregular hours could drop in and get the jab on the job. By stopping in and getting the shot, they protected themselves, their families and all Queenslanders. To our truckies getting vaccinated, as the Minister for Transport and Main Roads I sincerely say thank you from the bottom of my heart.

To date we have done more than 500 jabs for truckies at our two specialised clinics on the border. The industry has answered our calls and, since the new rules kicked in, compliance levels at the border are high. To give the House some idea, 1,472 heavy vehicles were stopped at our border in the 24 hours to 10 o'clock last night and only 11 of those were turned around. I thank the industry and our truckies for this high level of compliance and cooperation at such a difficult time.

The truckies have been the unsung heroes of the pandemic, keeping our supply chains open all day every day. This rollout of vaccine requirements has been successful to date and may well be used as a model by other industries and other states. Vaccination is our path out of the pandemic. Getting more Queenslanders vaccinated is the only way we can protect our current way of life and keep our economic recovery underway. Despite the desperate spin from obvious suspects, the Palaszczuk Labor government has delivered a world-leading COVID response. I thank the freight industry for getting behind it, protecting families and protecting all Queenslanders.