




Speech By
Robbie Katter

MEMBER FOR TRAEGER

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MOTION

Coronavirus, Vaccination Mandate

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (4.54 pm): I rise to speak on behalf of the KAP against the government's motion. The KAP has been quite clear on our position. We respect the job that any government is trying to do in rolling these vaccinations out. From the start our message has been that we recommend that people consult their doctor or talk to their medical adviser and get advice from them and make their choice, and when they make that choice we respect that. We are a party that founded itself on personal freedoms and choices, so we are trying to be true to the principles that people voted for us on in that respect.

The government is faced with an extraordinary situation—we accept that—but there are some interesting points to reflect on in the context of this debate. I am told that childhood vaccinations are around 95 per cent, so no-one is holding a gun to their heads. When people trust the science and trust what people are telling them, they can make logical choices. What we are consistently hearing is, 'The more I'm being told by government I'm forced to do this, the more I don't want to get it. I've got nothing against vaccinations.' There is the question of trust here, because those of us in North Queensland have been fed garbage about tree-clearing science and we have been fed garbage about the reef science. Peter Ridd pulled out and was sacked for it, and no-one has proved him wrong. No-one is game to even try to prove him wrong; they just got rid of him out of the job. This is all flawing the trust in government and the science. It underscores the fact that under normal conditions people reasonably would say, 'Yeah, I'll get the vaccination. I've got no problem.' However, when the government starts forcing and saying, 'This is what's got to be done,' that is when it is encountering problems.

The other issue I want to raise is that, on reflection for me, we are having trouble keeping hospitals open in the electorate. Julia Creek was downgraded and I am told that it still will not go back to a 24-hour service. We cannot get nurses into hospitals in some areas. Some extra staffing does come, but if not they are still told to roll out this massive health program.

Someone said that it was only 20 per cent in Doomadgee. I rang up Doomadgee asking if there was a sentiment against it. I was told, 'No, there's not really a sentiment against it.' Therefore, I made the assumption that they had not had proper exposure to getting either education or having the vaccine there available to them.

Another family pulled me up in town the other week to say that their kids were given one day to go into Richmond to get it. They were told, 'You've got to go on this day to get it.' They said, 'We're mustering cattle. We're busy. We can't get in that day.' Tough luck!

Then there is the question of health services. If we cannot even perform the primary health functions in regional and rural areas, how can we be expected to roll this out on top? Before the government starts mandating and enforcing this, it has to lift its game on the other things it can be doing. There is a lot more that can be done before forcing this down people's throats.