



Speech By
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MEMBER FOR NOOSA

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PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENT

Coronavirus, Vaccination

 **Ms BOLTON** (Noosa—Ind) (2.31 pm): Hundreds of thousands of Queenslanders are putting the 'together' back into our COVID mantra. Segregating people in our communities based on vaccination status is not what Australians aspire to. Never in any road map did it say that as international borders opened, we would lock out loved ones from cafes and libraries or from being able to travel in our own country or that telehealth would not continue to be used by our psychologists when we have a chronic shortage. None of these decisions pass the pub test, nor does the divisive labelling used by governments and media of 'vaxxer' and 'anti-vaxxer'. It is discriminatory and misinformed.

Across Queensland many who practise wellbeing through natural therapies do not normally participate in vaccinations, just as some religions do not. Noosa is renowned for its healing and wellness retreats as well as high vaccination rates. Our respected and educated practitioners such as chiropractors, holistic dentists, therapists, social workers and naturopaths focus on prevention through education, nutrition and alignment to develop strong immune systems as part of healing. These professionals who look after us and our loved ones through domestic violence, cancer and other health battles work daily with those who have transmittable diseases, including HIV. They do not reject them; they mitigate the risk. They have hundreds of thousands of patients, clients and staff who do not or cannot put any form of toxins into their systems including sugars, metals, chemicals or preservatives as part of their beliefs and recoveries. They are not anti vax; they are pro natural and pro choice.

Queensland struggles to meet the demand for health services to accommodate our poor lifestyle choices that diminish our immune systems, lead to preventable chronic illnesses and death. One would think we would support those who work on decreasing our reliance on interventions, medications and hospitalisations. Instead, we are ostracising these Queenslanders by labelling them, often referring to them as 'hippies in the hills' or 'renegades'. These practitioners and associated research are vital components in a world that will continue to face pandemics and mutating viruses. The Australian Institute of Tropical Health and Medicine is utilising nature and Indigenous knowledge in developing medicines. The Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research is spending millions on a treatment to get our immune systems fitter to deal with viruses and other diseases. Who knows? We may ultimately not need vaccines at all.

Until then, I ask the handful of extremists from both ends of the spectrum to stop spreading fear and drowning out those who seek ways to keep our community safe without segregation. We entered this pandemic together and can only get through it together, masks and all, not by dividing our communities and families, devastating small businesses and vilifying what has been termed a minority. We are much, much better than that.