




Speech By
Hon. Dr Steven Miles
MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA

Record of Proceedings, 15 September 2021

MOTION

Queensland Border Restrictions

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning) (5.09 pm): I move the following amendment—

That all words after “notes” be omitted and the following inserted:

- (a) the Palaszczuk government’s strong actions which have kept Queenslanders safe from COVID-19;
- (b) the federal government’s inaction for months to establish quarantine facilities;
- (c) the federal government’s inability to secure enough COVID-19 vaccines early; and
- (d) the Palaszczuk government’s decision to build a quarantine facility at Wellcamp to support Queenslanders and Australians return home; and

urges all Queenslanders to roll up their sleeve and get their COVID-19 vaccination.’

Queensland has done remarkably well through the pandemic. While economies across the world have been devastated by COVID, Queenslanders are ahead of the rest of the world in our economic recovery, thanks to our strong health response and the hard work of the Queensland community. Our pubs and cafes are open, construction sites are active, and our kids can play sport on the weekend. That we can do all these things is not up to luck. It is 596 days since the beginning of the pandemic and our government, those on this side of the House, have spent every one of those days doing the heavy lifting to keep Queenslanders safe.

On most of those days we have had to call on the Morrison government to do better. In order to ensure our economic recovery, we know we need fit-for-purpose quarantine facilities. Along with vaccination, secure, purpose-built regional facilities are the best way to keep us safe and avoid economically crippling lockdowns. The Palaszczuk government has been calling for dedicated facilities since January, but for months the Morrison government has refused to work with us. When we proposed our 1,000-bed dedicated quarantine facility at Wellcamp, Queenslanders heard all the federal government’s excuses. They said there was not enough detail, so we provided them more detail. They said big planes could not land there, so we showed them a picture of the Prime Minister’s big plane landed there. The Prime Minister even said Toowoomba was in the desert. Perhaps even the members for Toowoomba can support us that Toowoomba is not in the desert. Time and time again, the federal government has failed to take any responsibility for quarantine.

Mr Watts interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Pause the clock! Member for Toowoomba North, I ask you to cease your interjections. They are not being taken.

Dr MILES: Now we have found out that the Morrison government have been secretly planning their own private quarantine facility in the Northern Territory to be built on private land. Wellcamp would be built by now if the Morrison government had put politics aside instead of rejecting our idea.

I wish I could say quarantine was the only thing they have failed at, but it is not even close. With thousands of COVID cases just over our border in New South Wales and New South Wales health authorities effectively ceasing contact tracing, Queenslanders are racing to get vaccinated as quickly as possible. We are racing to get our population vaccinated before the virus enters Queensland.

However, more than 100,000 vaccines were redirected from Queensland to New South Wales with plans to redirect more of Queensland's share in coming months. We are using all the vaccines we are being allocated, yet last week Greg Hunt continued to criticise Queenslanders, despite knowing full well our allocation of vaccines is fully utilised and that his government is taking vaccines that were destined for Queenslanders and sending them to Sydney.

It gets worse. Last week it was revealed that Australia missed out on millions of doses of Pfizer because Greg Hunt refused to meet with Pfizer representatives for over a month last year. Australia could have had millions of Pfizer doses as early as last year, but the Morrison government would not even have a meeting. If the Morrison government had secured a million doses last year, New South Wales might have been saved from this devastating outbreak. If the Morrison government had met its own vaccination targets, our borders might have been able to stay open. If those opposite had the strength of character to put pressure on their mates in Canberra, the federal LNP might not have sent all of Queensland's vaccines down south to Sydney.

The Palaszczuk government will continue to put as many vaccines as possible in the arms of Queenslanders and continue to deliver on our economic recovery plan.

(Time expired)