




Speech By
Hon. Dr Steven Miles

MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Coronavirus, Vaccination; Local Government

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics Infrastructure) (9.43 am): The Palaszczuk government is driving to get every eligible Queenslanders vaccinated. Last week I went to Mount Isa and saw firsthand what the council, the health service and the community leaders are doing together to get their people vaccinated. The mayor took me to a vaccination clinic in town where they have extended their hours to get more people through. They also have a pop-up clinic at Kmart. They call it a shop and a shot. However, their vaccination rate is still only 48.5 per cent fully vaccinated. I said, 'Who could convince more people here to go and get their vaccination?' They were resolute that it was just one person—Charlie Cameron. Charlie plays for the Brisbane Lions, he was born in Mount Isa and is a local hero, especially to younger people there. With the help of the Lions, we got him there. He is flying in today and he will be on the ground talking to young people and encouraging them to keep themselves, their friends and their families safe from COVID by getting vaccinated.

Then I went to my ministerial championship community of Pormpuraaw. I am proud to report they are now 98 per cent vaccinated. When I landed, they told me they had just 11 people to go. The health service and the council were tracking them down and explaining to them the importance of the vaccine in keeping their communities safe. They have done an incredible job.

Yesterday I was in Mackay where vaccination rates are 71.2 per cent first dose and just 53.5 per cent fully vaccinated. Mayors from right across the state joined me in getting the message out: get vaccinated to protect the life you love. Do it to protect yourself, your family and your loved ones.

I spent some time at the LGAQ's annual conference in Mackay and I would like to thank them for their efforts supporting our vaccination campaign. I also heard their concerns about some investigations by the Office of the Independent Assessor. The Palaszczuk government is committed to ensuring transparency and accountability in the decision-making of Queensland councils. Queenslanders expect their councillors to be strong and fair representatives for their community. The reforms we have implemented in local government are extremely important, but confidence in the system of integrity is also crucial. In light of recent issues, I have asked the parliamentary committee that has oversight of the OIA to conduct a review, and I would like to table my letter to the committee chair, the member for Bancroft.

The LGAQ conference also provided a fitting opportunity to farewell Mr Greg Hallam. There would be very few Queenslanders who have worked harder for the local government sector than Greg during his many decades of service. Greg departs after an incredible 29 years in the role of Chief Executive Officer. On behalf of the Queensland government, I would like to thank Greg for his service to the sector and to his state and for the manner in which he has proudly represented local government. We wish him all the best and congratulate Alison, the incoming CEO, the first woman to hold that role.