




Speech By  
**Hon. Dr Steven Miles**  
**MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA**

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Record of Proceedings, 30 November 2021

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Coronavirus, Quarantine Facilities; Neville Bonner Bridge

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics Infrastructure) (9.44 am): The federal government has delayed the reopening of our international borders due to concerns about the Omicron COVID-19 strain. That is the right call while our health experts assess the risk and severity of the new strain. It also shows that our regional quarantine facility is absolutely vital to the health response while we manage emerging strains. Next year we will need our hotels for tourists, visitors and business travel. We need dedicated, purpose-built facilities for if and when we need to quarantine arrivals.

The Palaszczuk government has never shied away from being cautious and well prepared, and that foresight has stood Queensland in excellent stead. We will not be without available accommodation, as are some other states now. This morning Jennifer Westacott, the head of the Business Council of Australia, told ABC Radio National that we should be delivering purpose-built quarantine facilities across the country, just like we are doing here in Queensland. It shows business can see the enormous risks if we cannot properly quarantine people with emerging strains.

We have moved quickly to build the accommodation facility we announced. The federal government's Pinkenba site could be a welcome addition to our quarantine capacity, but they have already halved their proposed capacity and even their half-sized facility will not be ready until well into next year. We are awaiting details of a lease agreement with the Commonwealth.

On the other hand, Wellcamp has undergone a rapid construction period. While the weather has slowed some construction on site, delays are being closely monitored with Wagner Corporation to ensure the facility is ready as soon as possible. I thank all the staff working around the clock to make this happen, particularly the construction workers who are on site in these wet conditions. Currently there are over 400 local construction workers on site. Now is the time for the Morrison government to put politics aside and start actively supporting Queensland's dedicated regional quarantine facility.

I mention another important milestone on another important project. Yesterday the education minister and I went up onto the Neville Bonner Bridge to see the three sections of steel superstructure that were uplifted last week. Two arch segments, both measuring 60 metres long and weighing in at 90 tonnes, were installed and will hold up a crowning arch sitting 30 metres above the river. The bridge will provide a vital link connecting what will be two of Brisbane's busiest social and entertainment precincts, South Bank and Queen's Wharf Brisbane. We are at the beginning of a golden decade for Queensland leading into the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games and these projects are not only transforming our city but also creating jobs.