




Speech By
Hon. Yvette D'Ath

MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Coronavirus, Update; Coronavirus, Vaccine

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (9.57 am): As the Premier has advised the House, today Queensland has recorded no new COVID cases. We now have 20 active cases, down from almost 80 at our peak a couple of weeks ago. Queensland is continuing to manage the vaccine rollout in a measured and methodical manner. Of course, in light of the updated TGA advice relating to the AstraZeneca vaccine, we have had to significantly adapt our vaccination rollout approach.

As flagged by the federal government, work is now being conducted through national cabinet, health ministers and officials to reconfigure the national rollout of the vaccine. It is essential that we work together to readjust and refocus this rollout in light of recent developments. Let us be clear: the TGA advice does not prevent any person under the age of 50 from getting the AstraZeneca vaccine. If a person is under the age of 50 years old and gives informed consent to receive the AstraZeneca vaccine, they are entitled to access that vaccine when their turn comes. Any person who has already received the AstraZeneca vaccine can safely proceed to receive their second AstraZeneca dose regardless of their age.

It is a matter of fact that we need more Pfizer vaccines to ensure we can vaccinate the rest of Queensland's priority groups. We will continue to communicate with the Commonwealth with regard to the delivery of the additional Pfizer doses they have secured. We are also in the process of training staff in every one of our hospital and health services across the state to stand up Pfizer hubs, ensuring access to vaccines is regionally equitable. We have six major hubs of Pfizer, and AstraZeneca everywhere else, across the state to ensure that everyone everywhere will be eligible and able to get the vaccine. The challenge now is to pivot to get Pfizer to every part of this state for those people under 50.

The most recent COVID-19 clusters were a stark reminder that the virus remains a threat. It is a testament to Queensland that we were able to contain the outbreaks to 23 cases in Greater Brisbane and confine the lockdown to three days. With more than 150 exposure sites and 2,500 close contacts identified and more than 82,000 tests conducted, the three-day lockdown ensured our world-class contact tracers had the time they needed to trace, contact, test and isolate, ensuring that there was no widespread community transmission.

After the snap lockdown ended I was fortunate to meet with some of our world-class contact tracers to thank them for their brilliant work on behalf of the government and the people of Queensland. While most of our contact tracing staff have public health backgrounds and come directly from the health system, such as nurses, doctors and environmental health officers, some might be surprised to know that, when we have outbreaks, many other people come in to perform that very important role. We have records managers, intelligence officers, IT specialists, compliance officers, molecule scientists, veterinarians, policy officers and analysts. They are highly trained and, as evident throughout the

pandemic, very good at what they do. Without their efforts we may have been locked down over the entire Easter holiday period. On behalf of all Queenslanders I thank the amazing contact tracers for the brilliant work that they do to keep us safe.