



Speech By  
**Hon. Yvette D'Ath**


**MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE**

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Record of Proceedings, 27 October 2021

## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

### **Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders, Health Services**

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (9.53 am): The Palaszczuk government is committed to supporting First Nations peoples achieve better health outcomes across the state. Yesterday, I had the pleasure of co-launching Making Tracks Together, Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health equity framework, with Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council Chairperson, Mr Matthew Cooke, and representatives from the First Nations health sector.

I thank the more than 490 people from across Queensland, both in the health system and community, who committed to the process of co-design and engagement to develop the framework. This process is a demonstration of the Palaszczuk government's commitment to reframing our relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Queensland is leading the way in the design and delivery of First Nations healthcare services, which has largely been enabled by the amendments made to the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011 earlier this year. Every hospital and health service is now required to partner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations to design and deliver local healthcare services. Because of this nation-first change, I can announce that there are currently 23 First Nations board members sitting across all 16 of our hospital and health service boards. Every hospital and health service is also required to deliver their First Nations health equity strategies by April 2022.

The Making Tracks Together health equity framework will inform these strategies that will facilitate local solutions developed between HHSs and local First Nations peoples. We know the life expectancy of First Nations peoples is almost 10 years less than for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples so every change we implement must close the life expectancy gap and work to reduce inequality. That is why the Palaszczuk government is focused on placing First Nations voices at the centre of their own health care and prioritising their needs. This will ensure our healthcare system is delivering culturally responsive, adaptive, equitable and appropriate care, irrespective of where any Queenslanders is from or the care they seek. Our First Nations Queenslanders deserve the very best possible health care, and that is what we are seeking to deliver.

Off the back of this co-launch yesterday, I reiterate the importance of our First Nations people getting the COVID vaccine. I am not just talking about in our remote communities. The majority of our First Nations people live in South-East Queensland. We call on all First Nations people to come forward and get vaccinated to protect themselves and their loved ones.

I am also calling on the Commonwealth to do more to partner with us to get the vaccine into these communities. The agreement from the beginning was that the Commonwealth would take responsibility for the rollout of the vaccine to our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It is Queenslanders and the Queensland government that are doing this work, along with our amazing First Nations people's organisations such as the Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council. We cannot do this alone.

We need to ensure that we get these vaccination rates up to protect our communities. The Commonwealth needs to be stepping up. They need to be putting in more resources. They need to be putting in more money. They need to stop standing up and harping on about our vaccination rates when quite honestly that is the only contribution they are making to the vaccination rollout right now.