



Speech By
Hon. Yvette D'Ath

MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Coronavirus, Vaccination

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (9.55 am): For the past nine months we have been rolling out the COVID-19 vaccine across the state. Millions of Queenslanders have been vaccinated by thousands of health workers. We have stood up hundreds of vaccination clinics across every corner of the state. We have teams going door to door engaging with Queenslanders to ensure they are able to protect themselves and their families. That hard work is paying off.

Today more than 80 per cent of Queenslanders aged 16 and over have received at least one dose and more than 70 per cent are fully vaccinated. Yesterday we announced that Queensland reached our first vaccination target under Queensland's COVID-19 Vaccine Plan to Unite Families: 70 per cent fully vaccinated. Reaching this target means that people who have been in a hotspot in the past 14 days can now enter Queensland and home quarantine if they are fully vaccinated, arriving by air and have had a negative COVID test within 72 hours prior to arriving. It brings us one step closer to the 80 per cent fully vaccinated target, which will see even more freedoms for the vaccinated as our borders open.

Last week we announced public health measures linked to vaccination status, providing a pathway that will allow businesses to return to operating at full capacity. I know this has been welcomed by the tourism and business sectors alike, which continually advocated for a public health direction to give them the certainty they needed to ensure their staff were vaccinated as were customers walking through their doors. To enable this to occur, anyone vaccinated when the borders open to 80 per cent double dosed will be able to access vulnerable settings and non-essential leisure activities. This is to offer greater protection to the unvaccinated from COVID-19. We know that high-risk settings like pubs and bars, nightclubs, indoor live music venues and restaurants can be lightning rods for COVID-19 transmission. These rules will also assist businesses by reducing the risk of their staff becoming infected and impacting closures.

We also need to protect our most vulnerable Queenslanders. That is why only vaccinated people will be able to visit hospitals, residential aged-care facilities, disability care accommodation and prisons. I want to be clear: this does not apply to patients. Every Queensland hospital accepts anyone who turns up at their door. This is about visitors. This is about making sure that those who arrive to visit their loved ones are not putting them at greater risk by being unvaccinated and potentially carrying the virus with them.

Communities across Queensland will be exposed to COVID-19 eventually, and we know that being vaccinated is the best way to be protected against serious illness. Queenslanders are heeding that message. In the five days after our announcement we saw a 62 per cent increase in the number of people getting vaccinated compared to the five days prior. We have also seen a significant increase in the uptake of vaccination amongst our First Nations Queenslanders. In the last week we administered

10,385 doses compared to 2,000 the week before. Queenslanders have done so well throughout the course of this pandemic. We know that COVID is coming and it will have a huge impact on all of our lives, but we can protect ourselves, our families and our economy by getting vaccinated.