




Speech By
Hon. Yvette D'Ath

MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

Record of Proceedings, 17 November 2021

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Coronavirus, Vaccination

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (9.54 am): Our vaccination rates continue to grow. Today we have seen our first-dose numbers grow at an impressive rate and we are speeding towards the 80 per cent double-dose mark. This is reflective of the significant vaccine take-up we have seen since the announcement made by the Premier last week. Vaccination is our key to safely enjoying places like pubs, clubs, cafes and mass sporting events without the presence of the public health restrictions.

Building our vaccination rate is not just about removing restrictions; it is about reuniting Queenslanders. After hitting the 70 per cent double-dose rate, Queensland has been able to move to the next phase of our vaccine plan and facilitate the home quarantine of interstate arrivals from domestic hotspots.

Already we have seen 141 arrivals into Queensland and I am advised we are expecting a further 211 arrivals today, with 1,319 home quarantine border passes having been issued in the first day and a half since we hit our 70 per cent double dose and move to the next phase of our vaccine plan.

We are also working with those arrivals from interstate hotspots who are currently in hotel quarantine to transition them, where eligible, into home quarantine. Our HHSs have already identified more than 100 hotel quarantine guests who are eligible to undertake the remainder of their quarantine period at home and are working with many more to continue the work of assessing their eligibility. This progress is incredibly encouraging and it is a testament to the hard work of every single Queenslanders.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, all Queenslanders have been asked to make significant sacrifices. We have met and surpassed every challenge we have confronted. We have been able to protect ourselves, our vulnerable, our hospital system and our economy. But let me be clear: we will open up come 17 December at the very latest. COVID will come into Queensland and it will hunt down the unvaccinated.

We already have the Doomadgee community on high alert after a positive COVID-19 case in the nearby Robinson River and greater Katherine in the Northern Territory, with residents frequently travelling between Doomadgee and those locations. I want to thank the community because they came out in good numbers to get vaccinated yesterday and I am sure they will continue to do so. The great news is that so far there are no positive cases. However, it does remind us of the risks and it is sad to see the reports from the Northern Territory that for the first time they are seeing an outbreak of COVID in remote Indigenous communities. This is a reminder for everybody in Queensland, particularly our remote communities, but to our First Nations people right across the state, come out and get vaccinated now. Please do not wait. This virus will challenge communities. It will challenge our health system, just as it has done in every other jurisdiction where it has taken hold.

I want to thank all those who have stepped up and got the jab. I want to encourage any unvaccinated Queenslanders to get vaccinated and ensure that you are fully protected before COVID-19 comes to Queensland. The vaccine is safe, it is effective and it is free. If you are having doubts, talk to your family doctor and get proper advice from a medical professional. You can pop down to your GP, your community pharmacy, your local school this weekend or any other vaccination hub. Do whatever you need to do to ensure you are protecting yourself, your family and your community.