



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


**MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE**

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**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**Dempsey, Ms G; Coronavirus, Vaccination**

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (9.53 am): Yesterday Australia had some tragic news. Gillian 'Jill' Dempsey, an emergency department nurse from Angliss Hospital in Victoria, was Australia's first nurse to pass away due to COVID-19. Jill was a mother of three and a frontline hero who worked the night shift caring for her fellow citizens. She was by all accounts the epitome of the compassionate approach to patient care that defines the nursing profession. I want to extend my condolences to her family, friends and colleagues at this incredibly difficult time.

Sadly, globally Jill's story is not an isolated one. The World Health Organization estimates that at least 115,000 health professionals have passed away due to COVID-19, often contracting it in the workplace while they care for COVID patients. As the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation says, 'Nurses and midwives don't want to be heroes. They want to go home to their families and loved ones at the end of a shift.' They went on to say, 'Please know nurses, midwives and personal care workers are doing everything they can to care for you. Please take every measure you can to take care of them.'

As Queensland continues to open up, we know that COVID-19 will come to our state. We know that our health staff will be at greater risk. While we have protected these staff members with our health worker vaccine mandate, every Queenslanders can assist in providing further protection to our health heroes. They can roll up their sleeve to get vaccinated. They can go to their GP. They can go to their pharmacy. They can go to any of our Queensland Health vaccination clinics in the community. If you are having any doubts or want to talk about any concerns, talk to a trusted medical professional—not Facebook. Vaccinations do not just help us protect ourselves; they have helped us get back to the things and people we love.

After Queensland hit 70 per cent double dosed, we were able to facilitate returning Queenslanders' entry into home quarantine, rather than hotel quarantine. We now have 6,266 people who are in home quarantine since we hit 70 per cent double dosed. I want to thank those people for getting vaccinated, for getting their PCR test as required and for their compliance with home quarantine. We know it is not easy, but they are doing their bit to keep us safe. As we have seen recently, when you do breach quarantine you could be fined and you could be put in hotel quarantine where you will be paying for that quarantine.

Our transition to home quarantine is a prime example of how the Palaszczuk government's measured and cautious approach is protecting our community and economy and ensures Queenslanders can come home. Queensland's vaccine numbers are continuing to grow. We now have 86.46 per cent of Queenslanders who have received at least their first dose of the vaccine. We now hear that the Commonwealth is seeking advice as to whether we should reduce the time between your second dose and the booster.

While we talk about people getting even stronger protection through a booster, let us remember that we still have close to 14 per cent of eligible Queenslanders aged 16 and above who have yet to have one jab. We know that this virus will hunt down the unvaccinated. We want to see those people protected. We want to see them protecting their friends, their families and our health workforce. So come on, unvaccinated Queenslanders, roll up your sleeve and get the vaccine—it is safe, free, and effective.