



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


**MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE**

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Record of Proceedings, 10 May 2022

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**Ambulance Service; Flu Season**

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (10.00 am): The Palaszczuk government backs our frontline health staff. In the past five months we have recorded the four busiest days ever in the history of the Queensland Ambulance Service. Since the Omicron variant of COVID-19 first emerged here in Queensland our Ambulance Service has answered more calls, visited more homes and treated more patients than ever before. In the face of huge demand pressures, our paramedics and hardworking Queensland ambulance staff have stepped up to support Queenslanders in their time of need.

That is why I am pleased to advise the House that we are welcoming an additional 120 paramedics to the Queensland Ambulance Service family this month. Right now 60 paramedics are undertaking their induction training ahead of hitting the ground across all corners of the state. Another 60 paramedics will start their induction later this month. The Palaszczuk government is proud of our strong track record in backing our frontline staff. It is why we will deliver 535 additional officers this term of government, helping to deal with record demand. I am so happy to welcome our new and enthusiastic ambulance officers, who have stepped up to join the front line at a time when they are needed most. I want to thank every single one of our hardworking ambulance officers and operations centre staff who work tirelessly to ensure Queenslanders are cared for every day.

Importantly, I want to remind all Queenslanders that this year—of all years—is the year to not be complacent about the flu and getting your flu jab. The influenza wave is accelerating rapidly. More than 1,000 influenza cases were reported in Queensland last week—more than double the previous week. This is the highest number of flu cases seen in early May in recent years. There have also been 63 cases of influenza and COVID identified to date. This all reinforces the need for as many Queenslanders as possible to get the flu vaccine and the COVID vaccine if you have not had it yet. Queenslanders can get the flu and COVID vaccines at the same time. Vaccines are widely available through local pharmacies, GP clinics and some workplaces and are free to vulnerable groups such as pregnant women, the elderly and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

COVID vaccination rates for our 16-year-olds plus are now at 93.73 per cent first dose and 92.18 per cent second dose; however, boosters are at 62.7 per cent and our five- to 11-year-olds are at 43.65 per cent. I say to Queenslanders: please come forward and get vaccinated for the flu to protect yourself and your loved ones and to protect themselves and their families from serious illness by getting their vaccination for COVID as well. We know that getting COVID and influenza at the same time increases the risk of serious illness. I ask all Queenslanders not to take the risk and to get updated with their vaccinations.