




Speech By
Hon. Yvette D'Ath

MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

World AIDS Day; Parliament, Conventions

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (10.05 am): Today, 1 December, is World AIDS Day. As Minister for Health, it is a day I am proud to commemorate. World AIDS Day is recognised in over 190 countries and has been recognised in this state since 1992. Several candlelight vigils will be held across the state tonight, including in Brisbane at the New Farm Park Rotunda—I am hoping, weather permitting—to raise awareness about HIV and AIDS.

In Queensland, evidence demonstrates the increasing proportion of people newly diagnosed with HIV achieving viral suppression within six months due to effective treatment and monitoring, regardless of where they live. This success is also reflected in the decrease of new HIV diagnoses, down from a peak of 246 in 2014 to just 124 last year. While this is testament to the success of our collective response to HIV and AIDS, we must remain vigilant in the fact that HIV is still very much an important public health issue in this country. In fact, HIV remains a priority in the Queensland government's Sexual Health Framework, released in January this year. Supporting this framework are a series of action plans including the Queensland HIV Action Plan, which will be updated in early 2023 following the launch of the ninth National HIV Strategy 2023-2030.

We have made significant progress in the five priority action areas of the Queensland HIV Action Plan including across prevention, testing, treatment, addressing both stigma and discrimination, and research and surveillance. We have rallied together across government, non-government and community controlled health services to achieve outcomes. We have increased access to medication which significantly reduces a person's risk of HIV. We have implemented peer-led education and awareness-raising programs as well as point-of-care testing programs.

All of these positive contributions are the result of our actions, so I stand here today to further our commitment to people living with HIV and AIDS. Today I will join Brisbane's deputy mayor, Krista Adams, in signing the Paris Declaration right here at Parliament House. Today, Brisbane and the state of Queensland will join the Fast-Track Cities network of more than 350 cities across the world committed to end the AIDS epidemic by 2030. This Fast-Track strategy aims to achieve 95-95-95 HIV targets to ensure that 95 per cent of people living with HIV will know their status, 95 per cent of all people living with HIV will receive sustained antiretroviral treatment and 95 per cent of all people living with HIV on antiretroviral treatment will maintain viral suppression. We are almost there. In fact, of the estimated 5,850 people living with HIV in Queensland last year, 91 per cent know their HIV status. Of these, 91 per cent were on antiretroviral therapy and 93 per cent of these people were maintaining a suppressed viral load. These figures are a testament to Queensland's response to HIV and AIDS so far, and I am excited to see what we can achieve together by 2030.

Mr Speaker, you mentioned at the start of today the importance of members of this chamber following the rules of this parliament. I also want to reflect on the importance of following convention in this parliament. That includes the convention of not reflecting on the absence of a member from the chamber. I feel the need to raise this because the Manager of Opposition Business yesterday afternoon put out a social media post that stated—

Labor's vote just went from 47 to 48. What changed? The Leader of the House @YvetteDAth finally made it to the house on time. The person charged with setting their standard didn't not show up in time for a vote. Talk about another stumble in a very bad year.

The convention to not reflect on someone's absence is there for a reason. Whether government or non-government members, members could be absent because they are attending a very special event or function that requires their attendance. They could be attending a funeral. They could be sick or, as in my case, they could be undertaking a medical procedure as a follow-up from their most recent skin cancer check.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mrs D'ATH: I should not need to stand in this chamber and explain my absence. I think the response of those opposite right now is atrocious. The convention is there for a reason and everybody should respect that, especially the Manager of Opposition Business. I ask and remind members to follow that convention.

Mr Dick: Why don't you apologise?

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, Treasurer. You will direct your comments through the chair or you will be warned.