




Speech By
Hon. Shannon Fentiman

MEMBER FOR WATERFORD

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Cost of Living, Health

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women) (10.34 am): The Miles Labor government knows families are doing it tough right now, which is why we are stepping up efforts to help ease cost-of-living pressures, like today's huge announcement of \$1,000 for Queensland households towards their electricity bills. This is the largest cost-of-living relief package in our state's history, and of course it is delivered by a Labor government. We are not just providing cost-of-living relief through power rebates. Across our health system, the Miles Labor government is putting money on the table so that Queensland families do not have to. It is why we have invested \$40 million to provide flu vaccines to Queenslanders—completely free of charge. We have already seen a very strong start to the uptake of the flu vaccine, but with the weather beginning to cool down, I want to again urge everyone to please get their free jab.

For the first time, our government is investing \$90 million to roll out the life-saving meningococcal B vaccine for free for infants, children and teenagers—saving families hundreds of dollars. We have just launched a \$31 million RSV vaccination program to eliminate financial barriers for parents wanting to access the new vaccine for their bubs.

We are also making it easier and cheaper for Queenslanders to access basic medicines and treatments. Last week I launched with the Premier an Australian first Community Pharmacy Scope of Practice Pilot in Cairns, which enables pharmacists to treat and prescribe medicines for common health conditions. We know that it is becoming harder and harder to visit a GP, especially one that bulk-bills. That is why we have made the decision to expand the pilot to encompass the entire state of Queensland. This means that Queenslanders will be able to get treatment and management at their local pharmacy for things like asthma, school sores, nausea and vomiting, mild pain and inflammation, earaches, support to quit smoking, eczema, acne and hormonal contraception.

Our pharmacists are highly trained and regulated health professions; it just makes sense that they use their expertise to its full scope in order to deliver cheaper, more accessible health care to Queenslanders. Participating pharmacists must go back to uni so you know they are getting the right training to ensure they can safely treat Queenslanders. The training covers assessment, diagnosis and management of simple health conditions. This whole scheme is designed to supplement, not replace, existing services and give Queenslanders more choice to access health care close to home.

Pharmacists across North Queensland are expected to start providing services over the coming months, and the pilot will gradually expand as more pharmacists complete the required education and training. It is just one more example of how the Miles Labor government is delivering new and innovative solutions to ease cost-of-living pressures. Whether it is energy rebates, free flu shots or giving Queenslanders the ability to get health care directly from pharmacists in their communities, we are listening and delivering for Queensland.