




Speech By
Stephen Andrew

MEMBER FOR MIRANI

Record of Proceedings, 11 September 2024

MOTION

COVID-19, Response Review

 **Mr ANDREW** (Mirani—KAP) (4.40 pm): I start by thanking the member for Noosa for moving this incredibly important motion today. It is a motion I welcome and strongly support. The COVID-19 pandemic was a time of great upheaval and uncertainty that impacted every facet of Queenslanders' lives. The shadows cast by that time have carried through to the present day.

As an MP throughout the period of COVID, I witnessed firsthand the profound impacts the pandemic response had on members of my own community, and across Queensland more widely. Throughout this time, I witnessed the deep divisions that were created across the whole community and even within family households themselves. I saw good, hardworking Queenslanders in tears. Many of them lost everything as a result of the COVID response—their businesses, homes, livelihoods, friendships and much more—and the lockdowns and mandates. Most shocking of all was the way the elderly were treated in our aged-care homes at this time. Residents were often isolated for months at a time from visits and physical contact with their loved ones, causing a sharp decline in their physical and mental wellbeing.

Similar scenes were played out in our hospitals where, due to the border closures and restrictions, some patients were forced to die alone and without anyone by their side to hold their hand. Patients were isolated from loved ones in their final moments. Families were denied the opportunity to say goodbye and informed consent for procedures was ignored. Restrictions imposed on funerals and grieving processes added another layer of emotional distress for many families. Many people I spoke with at the time said that the trauma and distress this caused will remain with them for their lifetime.

It must never be allowed to happen again in this state or country. Since the pandemic ended, there has been no accounting for all of this. There has been no inquiry or examination into the decisions that were taken, the basis for those decisions and the fallout they caused individuals and communities across the state. Queensland does need closure. The only way to get it is for a full accounting of what happened back then. It was a dark chapter in the state's history, yet no-one wants to talk about it. Why is that? Many of the decisions made by the government in response to the pandemic lacked any clarity or supporting data. This caused enormous and ongoing mistrust of politicians, government officials, our institutions, the media and even doctors and the whole healthcare system in Queensland.

In addition to the terms of reference laid out in the member for Noosa's motion, a full COVID response inquiry must also examine the following specific areas: the use of faulty modelling, carried out on modelling software owned by Bill and Melinda Gates, which caused unnecessary fear and anxiety. I table a copy of the modelling program.

Tabled paper: Screenshot depicting graphs relating to COVID-19 research [1813](#).

The inquiry must also examine: judicial decisions regarding COVID-19 laws and policies that disregarded valid scientific evidence, placing in doubt the impartiality of the legal system; the silencing of scientists and doctors who questioned the government narrative, which also hindered legitimate public debate and scientific progress; and Ahpra's suspension of healthcare professionals who disagreed with the government's COVID policies, creating an incredibly chilling effect on the freedom of expression within the medical community. The significant rise in unexplained deaths following the COVID-19 vaccination rollout also demands urgent investigation, as does the government's failure to conduct a proper risk benefit analysis of lockdowns, mandates and vaccines.

In the years since the pandemic, we have witnessed a spiralling decrease in mental health, an increased demand on our hospital and health systems as well as ongoing long wait lists for critical appointments with medical specialists. The divisions within our community have not gone away. They have been papered over but remain there—festering, unresolved and impacting all areas of our lives.

Lockdowns, border closures, quarantine and mandates made up the most disruptive set of policies in the state's history—the ramifications of which have been life changing for many Queenslanders. All of it has led to a crisis of public trust and the underlying fear that it could happen again. We must acknowledge the pain and suffering inflicted before we can ever move forward. How else are we to learn from past mistakes or be able to work together to create a better model for future pandemics? We need a system that prioritises ethical practices, respects individual autonomy, upholds the highest standard of care and, most of all, displays compassion to our fellow people.