




Speech By
Hon. Tim Nicholls

MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Influenza, Vaccination; Blood and Plasma Donations; Illicit Smoking Products

 **Hon. TJ NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (10.38 am): The former Labor government failed to provide funding for the 2025 Free Flu Vaccination Program in their last budget—not a brass razoo. It is another failure by those opposite, led by the member for Waterford at that time. That is why the Crisafulli LNP government has stepped in to fill the breach and allocated \$25 million for this year's program.

As a result, I would like to thank the more than 1.3 million Queenslanders who have already rolled up their sleeves to receive the free flu jab this year. We want as many Queenslanders as possible to get vaccinated, especially those under the age of five and over the age of 65 who are most vulnerable to serious illness. I see a few thumbs up. Member for Lockyer, well done to you. Although I did not know you were over 65! Alongside the member for Thuringowa, I received my free flu jab at Cate's Chemist in Townsville. It is quick, easy and free for all Queenslanders aged six months and older to get vaccinated at their local community pharmacy or at their GP clinic.

Flu vaccination is not the only public health message we need to focus on in the cooler months. We know that blood and plasma donations decline during winter but the demand for these products does not slow down just because it gets cold. Australia needs more than 1.7 million donations every single year to keep up with demand. That is three donations every minute. I joined the members for Rockhampton and Keppel and some of our fantastic paramedics Susie, Angela and Brooke at the Rockhampton Lifeblood donation centre to remind Queenslanders of all blood types to spare 10 minutes to donate much needed blood. I rolled up my sleeve and donated 500 mls of Queensland parliament's finest. The record to beat, for those interested, is five minutes and 30 seconds so there is a challenge. I am encouraging all those in this place to do the same.

Finally, I recently informed the House that a few months ago Queensland Health conducted the nation's largest ever haul of illegal tobacco and vape products by a public health authority in the country, and the record breaking continues. Just last week, the Mackay Public Health Unit confiscated approximately 3.3 million cigarettes. That is 165,000 packets of cigarettes and almost 300 kilograms of loose tobacco known as chop-chop and almost 20,000 vapes from a single illegal warehouse in Mackay.

As the member for Mackay knows from his time as a police officer, you need to be tough on organised crime and criminal gangs and deprive them of their ability to generate a profit, and that is what the Crisafulli LNP government is doing. To put this recent raid into perspective, in that one single raid in Mackay more cigarettes and loose tobacco was seized than was seized in the entire state during Labor's final month in office. The Crisafulli government is sending a clear warning to every retailer who peddles these harmful products: if you are peddling these dangerous and illegal products your time is up. We are coming after you. We are looking after the health of Queenslanders and we are particularly protecting Queensland kids.