




Speech By
Hon. Tim Nicholls

MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Epilepsy, Purple Day; Influenza, Vaccination

 **Hon. TJ NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (9.53 am): Before I start my ministerial statement, I alert the chamber that today is Purple Day—otherwise known as world Epilepsy Day, to raise awareness and stand with those who are impacted by epilepsy. Of course, epilepsy is one of the areas that we cover with our election commitment around neuro wellness hubs—another election commitment that the Crisafulli LNP government is delivering for Queenslanders.

We know that many Queenslanders are doing it tough. That is why the Crisafulli LNP government is delivering cost-of-living relief to all Queenslanders, including from the mighty health department. As thousands of families are coming to grips with the reality of the 14th interest rate rise under the Albanese Labor government, the Crisafulli government continues to provide relief to ease the pressure on household budgets across the state.

On top of abolishing Labor's GP tax, Queenslanders will be pleased to know that this month we commenced the expanded and improved Free Flu Vaccination Program. Our new and expanded program will enable every Queensland aged six months and over to access the free flu vaccine ahead of winter—access for free and properly funded. For the first time in Australia, a needle-free nasal spray flu vaccine will be available for children aged two to five years, saving Queensland families between \$50 and \$100. This nasal spray vaccine will help improve uptake amongst young kids by removing the distress that we know can be caused with needle vaccinations. Importantly, the 2026 vaccines include a strain to better protect Queenslanders from the Super-K variant that threatens to make this year's flu season worse than in recent years.

Vaccine supplies are rolling out now, so now is the time for Queenslanders to consult with their GP, their pharmacist or their health provider about getting vaccinated. To help roll out the vaccine, we have also expanded the scope of practice for trained pharmacists, registered nurses, midwives and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners. This means these health practitioners can administer the flu vaccines not just in their typical place of practice but in many other areas. This means vaccinating in workplaces, at community and sporting events and, importantly, in remote communities.

This is Australia's largest and most accessible statewide free flu vaccination program. It is in sharp contrast to the appalling record of those opposite. Labor left the free flu vaccination program unfunded with plummeting vaccination rates, while ramping and elective surgery waitlists skyrocketed under their watch. After Labor's decade of decline, this is one of the many different ways we are delivering cost-of-living relief and easier access to health services and protecting the everyday life and wellbeing of Queenslanders.