

## **Question on Notice**

**No. 1275**

**Asked on 26 October 2021**

**MRS D FRECKLINGTON** ASKED THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND AMBULANCE SERVICES (HON Y D'ATH)—

### **QUESTION**

With reference to the Home Quarantine Trial announced on 7th October 2021—  
Will the Minister explain why the Somerset Local Government area has been excluded, given it is less than two hours from Brisbane and a rural area?

### **ANSWER**

The spread of the highly transmissible Delta variant of COVID-19 continues to present a significant risk to Australia and Queensland. Queensland's quarantine system throughout the pandemic has been key to suppressing COVID-19 and has proved effective in ensuring people returning from overseas or domestic hotspots enter the Queensland community safely.

Queensland continues to manage its quarantine arrangements for interstate and international arrivals based on the broader epidemiological conditions, vaccination rates and health system capacity.

Going forward, home quarantine will play an important role in supporting more travel into Queensland while continuing to mitigate against the risk of outbreaks.

Queensland's trial of 14-day home quarantine for fully vaccinated Queensland residents returning from declared interstate COVID-19 hotspots finished on 5 November. A total of 969 people participated plus 238 household members. Their feedback has been positive.

The purpose of the trial was to determine whether home quarantine under certain conditions is a feasible and safe alternative to hotel quarantine and maintaining the safety of the community and participants was a key consideration in determining the trial criteria. As is the case with any trial, it is important to make it as safe as possible.

Local Government Areas (LGAs) were chosen for the trial based on their proximity to Brisbane Airport, major hospitals, drive through testing clinics, and using the same logistics and health support structure that support current government-managed quarantine hotels.

Participants in the trial were required to present for drive-through COVID-19 testing on days 1, 5 and 12 of the trial.

The selected LGAs were in the main, within 15km of drive through testing clinics and designated COVID-19 hospitals, with some outer regions up to 45 minutes travel time to designated COVID-19 hospitals and drive through testing.

By comparison, Somerset LGA is located 60 – 120 km, or between 45 minutes and 1.5 hours driving time, from the nearest designated COVID-19 hospitals.

The home quarantine trial was a success and there was an extremely high level of compliance among participants. Home quarantine for those who are fully vaccinated will soon be made available more widely across Queensland, not just in the select LGAs in the trial.

Under Queensland's *COVID-19 Vaccine Plan To Unite Families*, since the state reached 70 per cent double-dose vaccination coverage, fully vaccinated Queenslanders arriving from interstate COVID-19 hotspots by air have been able to quarantine at home for 14 days, subject to compliance with the set of conditions for home quarantine.

Returning Queenslanders and eligible interstate travellers are able to arrive at any Queensland airport, but they can only transit to another destination if they transit through Brisbane. They can then drive to their home quarantine residence, as long as its within two hours without stopping. They can travel by either private car, a hire car with contactless pick-up, or an endorsed transport provider.

From 17 December fully vaccinated interstate arrivals from a hotspot who have also tested negative within 72 hours can enter Queensland via road or air and they will not need to quarantine. At this time, fully vaccinated Australians who are arriving from overseas, who have tested negative prior to boarding their flight into Queensland, will be able to quarantine at home subject to conditions set by Queensland Health. These measures will commence earlier than 17 December if 80 per cent of Queensland's population is fully vaccinated before that time.

I am confident that going forward, along with our high rates of vaccination coverage, home quarantine will provide a safe and appropriate alternative quarantine option in Queensland, and will very soon enable many more travellers who are fully vaccinated to reunite with their families and loved ones.