

Queensland Parliament Hansard Green


DATE: 27/05/2021

FILE: 27052021_001172_LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY_GREEN CHAMBER.DOCX

SUBJECT: Coronavirus, Vaccine Rollout

MEMBER: Ms LAUGA

Coronavirus, Vaccine Rollout

 **Ms LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (2.53 pm): Can I start by sending big love to our Victorian friends, family and colleagues as they battle a COVID-19 outbreak and go back into lockdown. To my gran, Heather, to my aunts and uncles and cousins who all live in Victoria, and to all Victorians: stay safe, stay strong. Queenslanders are with you.

The truth is though that Victoria should never have been put in this situation because the federal government should have fixed quarantine. The Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, had two big jobs this year: roll out the vaccine and fix quarantine. He has failed both. Whilst the federal government has failed to fix quarantine and the vaccine rollout, people in the Prime Minister's own team are jumping the gun and calling for the international border to reopen. You have to crawl before you can walk, but LNP Senator Matt Canavan is jumping the gun by saying Australians 'cannot stay under the doona forever' and calling for the international border to reopen.

Senator Canavan is again putting the cart before the horse. Australia is nowhere near ready to open the international border. Opening the international border prematurely will put Australians at risk. Before Senator Canavan drags Australians out from 'under the doona', we need millions more Aussies vaccinated and adequate quarantine facilities in place. Australians' safety must be the No. 1 priority. Queenslanders know from experience that, if you keep the community as safe as possible, the economy can open back up faster. We proved this as the best model only 12 months ago, and now our economic recovery plan is underway.

What is the senator doing to encourage Aussies to get vaccinated and progress better quarantine facilities? Absolutely nothing. Perhaps instead of handing out National Party how-to-vote cards in the New South Wales by-election recently, Senator Canavan could have recorded a new podcast about the importance of getting vaccinated. That would have been at least something to help us all get one step closer to living safely and allowing our national economy to recover.

I am proud that the Palaszczuk government is doing everything it can to make the COVID vaccine rollout easier in Queensland by opening 14 community based vaccination hubs by the end of July. The centres will be established to coincide with increased vaccine supply announced by the federal government. Members of the general public aged 40 to 49 who may want to receive a COVID-19 Pfizer vaccination will be able to register for vaccination.

Our job so far has been to vaccinate the 1a and 1b groups that include our workforce in hotel quarantine, health, police and other emergency services. Queensland Health has sufficient Pfizer stocks to continue that work and open up to the 40- to 49-year-old age group who may want to register to be vaccinated. We do not want an ounce of vaccine to go to waste. The Palaszczuk government will ensure that our vaccine rollout is as accessible as possible, and these community vaccine hubs will further assist Queenslanders, no matter where they are, to get access to the vaccine.

In closing, I would like to publicly thank the Queensland Health staff and the tireless efforts of our public health teams right across the state who are managing the vaccine rollout and for keeping us safe.