

CORONAVIRUS — VACCINATION PLAN

6. Mrs L.M. O'MALLEY to the Minister for Health:

My congratulations, Madam Speaker.

I refer to the state government's commitment to swiftly roll out the national cabinet's updated COVID-19 vaccination plan. Can the minister outline to the house how the state government is working to ensure that as many Western Australians as possible are vaccinated as quickly as possible; and can the minister advise the house why it is so important for Western Australians to receive the COVID-19 vaccination?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

Congratulations to you, Madam Speaker, and to the member for Bicton on her re-election, and congratulations to members in the other parties as well. In particular, I congratulate the member for Moore on his election as Deputy Leader of the Opposition; I know it is a noble position, having served in it once myself, and I wish him all the very best, if not every success, in his role!

By now we all know the importance of responding decisively and of making sure that we continue, as a community, to work together to overcome the impacts of this global pandemic. We have all seen the incredible work of the Western Australian community, which has made us so successful in combating this disease. We know the importance of continuing to do all the right things, as advised by public health experts, to ensure we stay safe.

We have seen images from across the globe, whether it is in the US, Brazil or the UK, which is now just starting to awaken from lockdowns. In particular, on behalf of everyone here, I want to reflect on the issues and incidents that we see going on in India at the moment. Our hearts, thoughts and best wishes go out to everyone in that country in their fight against this insidious disease.

We all know that the only way we are going to get out of the COVID-19 pandemic and keep ourselves and our loved ones safe is by developing immunity. The safest way for us to develop immunity is for all of us to take the opportunity to get ourselves vaccinated. We have seen how life in the United Kingdom is starting to change now that it is getting deep penetration of the vaccination program into its community. That is why our next task as a community is to make sure that we all take the opportunity to get ourselves vaccinated.

As of yesterday, the government had administered around 94 000 doses of either the AstraZeneca or Pfizer vaccine. Combined with our general practitioner networks and respiratory clinics, over 200 000 Western Australians have now had at least one dose of the vaccine. It is important that we all take the opportunity, when we are eligible, to get ourselves vaccinated. The state government has opened two state-run vaccination clinics, at the Claremont Showgrounds and in Redcliffe near Perth Airport. More state-run clinics will be established in the coming weeks. In Claremont, we have the capability to vaccinate around 5 500 people a day, and in Redcliffe, between 650 and 1 500 people a day. These clinics are now open to anyone over the age of 70. From Monday, 3 May, these clinics will be open to anyone aged 50 and over. It is so important that we all take the opportunity to get ourselves vaccinated. People in regional areas can access a COVID vaccine from their local participating GP or, if eligible under the same criteria as the clinics, at one of the 61 country locations operated by the WA Country Health Service. People aged 70 and over can also access the vaccine from a GP and from 17 May, local participating GPs can administer the vaccine to people aged 50 and over.

The time is here and the time has come for everyone to do their bit for themselves, their family and their community, and get vaccinated. That is the reason why the government yesterday launched the "Roll up for WA" campaign, which aims to get as many Western Australians vaccinated against COVID-19 as soon as possible. The campaign will cover digital, radio, television, print, out-of-home and social media channels. It features frontline workers who have all taken the opportunity to get themselves vaccinated to date—the healthcare workers, police, emergency workers and all those people who, to date, have filled our 1A and 1B cohort—and done the right thing. Now it is everyone else's turn. Eligible people in both metropolitan and regional locations can book an appointment for their COVID vaccine at any of the state-run community clinics or WACHS locations by phoning the 13 COVID number.

This is an important moment for Western Australia. It is one in which we now see the opportunity to turn the corner to keep ourselves safe, to get back to a new way that we might consider normal and make sure that we all take the opportunity to get ourselves vaccinated.

Before I sit down, I take the opportunity on behalf of everyone here to thank all our health teams who have been working so hard over the last 15 months to continue to keep us safe. I thank everyone, everywhere who is doing such a great job—whether it is in our hospitals, airports, hotel quarantine system, or ports—and doing the right thing to make sure that we keep Western Australia moving and, most importantly of all, keep Western Australians safe.