

# Media release

## JOINT STATEMENT

Premier and Minister for Trade

The Honourable Anastacia Palaszczuk

Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services

The Honourable Steven Miles



**Monday, March 02, 2020**

## **Queensland boosts coronavirus measures**

Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk has taken further steps to prepare Queensland for potential impacts of coronavirus.

Following a meeting of cabinet's Public Health and Safety committee the Premier announced those measures include:

- Tripling emergency department capacity and doubling intensive care capacity across all hospitals
- Purchasing an additional 110 ventilators
- \$25 million worth of medicines, gloves and masks brought forward
- Ensuring adequate staffing
- Additional capacity for fever clinics

The Premier said the hope was none of the measures would be needed but Queensland has to be prepared.

"Queensland is acknowledged as being among the best prepared for the outbreak of this virus," the Premier said.

"Our Chief Health Officer was preparing Queensland's defences while coronavirus was still 7000 kilometres from our shores.

"The State Health Emergency Co-Ordination Centre was activated on 25 January, barely three weeks after the first patients were identified in Wuhan.

"Preparation, containment and treatment are our best defence."

The Premier said Queenslanders can feel confident that our health system is working to keep them safe from the virus after chairing a meeting of the Public Health and Safety Cabinet Sub-committee.

"There is an experienced team of health experts – lead by Chief Health Officer Dr Jeannette Young – have been working behind the scenes to ensure Queensland is already in a strong position against COVID-19," Ms Palaszczuk said.

"A top priority is ensuring capacity in our emergency departments and our intensive care units and our hospitals are actively stock piling medicines and equipment, including an order of 110 new ventilators.

Health Minister Steven Miles said Queensland hospitals were ready to mobilise fever clinics if and when required.

"We discussed options for quarantine facilities also and asked Queensland Health to ensure staff levels are adequate. We are ready to redirect clinical staff into hospital positions when and where needed," he said.

"To ensure capacity in the coming months, I announced yesterday we would ramp up surgery.

"We've already increased our capacity to test for COVID-19 and have the capacity to increase testing when it is needed.

"Our focus has been on containment during January and early February this year. And we know it worked with no local transmission thanks to our quarantine and containment efforts.

"I know that Queensland Health is well prepared to keep Queenslanders safe, but we need our Federal counterparts to provide strong leadership, advice and consistent and equitable resources across Australia."

“We have responded well to health emergencies in the past, and I know that we will do it again.”

In another step, the current public health emergency declaration has been extended until midnight on 19 May. This enables Queensland Health to continue to enact all containment measures necessary.

Queensland Chief Health Officer Dr Jeannette Young said that Queenslanders have done a terrific job so far in helping to stop the spread of COVID-19.

“The community has a big part to play in continuing to stop the spread of coronavirus,” Dr Young said.

“Queenslanders have been incredibly cooperative in following quarantine directions and maintaining vigilance in their community.

“We also need the community to remain calm - you can rest assured we are working around the clock to manage this rapidly evolving issue.”

ENDS

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