

CORONAVIRUS — VACCINATIONS

680. Ms C.M. ROWE to the Minister for Health:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's success in keeping Western Australians safe throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

- (1) Can the minister update the house on the rollout of Western Australia's COVID-19 vaccine program?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house if he is aware of anyone seeking to threaten the health and safety of Western Australians?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for Belmont for the question. In addition to the information the member seeks, I am very proud and pleased to say that today is an official doughnut day. That means that we have no active cases of COVID-19 in Western Australia in either the community or SHICC facilities or hospitals.

Mr W.J. Johnston interjected.

Mr R.H. COOK: Honestly! It is the hotel quarantine facilities.

That has happened only three times during the entire experience of the global pandemic. It is an important day and one that gives us another opportunity to acknowledge the great work that has been undertaken by everyone in the health system, the emergency services and the Western Australia Police Force—a great, great effort. In addition, to date, over three million Western Australians have now done the right thing and been vaccinated. That puts us at 59.4 per cent of people aged over 12 years fully vaccinated, and 76.8 per cent now have had one dose. That puts us ahead of Queensland and the Northern Territory, and slightly behind South Australia, but, of course, it counts only people aged 15 and above. We count people aged 12 and above because we think kids matter as well. From that perspective, we are making good progress.

I am particularly heartened by the dedication of most people in the community, who are listening to the health advice and the science that backs it up and are protecting themselves, their families and their community. We can achieve great things when we work together. I want to thank all those people who have had the leadership to stand up and get themselves vaccinated. I want in particular to draw people's attention to the fact that Tony Galati from Spudshed got himself vaccinated over the weekend. That is not amazing in itself other than the fact that Tony Galati was one of those people we would call vaccine hesitant. He said that in his comments to the media. He said that at first he was not quite sure, but he listened to the advice and the science—and his wife!—and he did the right thing and got himself vaccinated. That is what we require. We require everyone to show leadership and to make sure that they do the right thing. That is not what we are seeing outside this place today.

We are seeing members of Parliament and staff bullied, intimidated and menaced by those outside who are seeking to divert the community's attention and our intent to make sure that we protect Western Australians. Through their physical and menacing behaviour, they are trying to intimidate members of Parliament and the government. Of course, we will not be intimidated. We will not be intimidated because everyone in this place is a leader and everyone in this place has an obligation to stand up against these people. That is the reason why it is disappointing when we see leaders in our community failing that very test that is on all of us. In particular, I note the comments from the spokesperson from Dr David Honey's office, who identified himself in social media comments outside this place just earlier today or yesterday. I am not sure which day it was; it does not matter. What matters is the comments that were made. He has been encouraging —

The SPEAKER: Minister, you do need to refer to people by their seat rather than their name.

Mr R.H. COOK: He is from the member for Cottesloe's office. I apologise, Madam Speaker. He referred to himself as from the office of Dr David Honey in his capacity as Leader of the Liberal Party. In those comments, this particular member gave more encouragement to these people outside the building. We accept their democratic right to protest. We do not accept their right to intimidate, physically menace and bully members of Parliament who are coming into this place. We do not accept their right to intimidate and bully those people who are coming here to work, doing their duty as members of Parliament or staffers in this place. We do not accept the comments from the member for Cottesloe's spokesperson that encourage this sort of behaviour and, once again, seek to undermine public confidence and public unity around these issues. What this person says is, "I think it is important to express their views directly here at the parliamentary precinct and to the members of Parliament", providing direct encouragement of this sort of behaviour. In addition to that, he says that the moment for restrictions in Western Australia—I assume he is referring to our border controls that have kept Western Australians safe and have led us to this position where we now have zero cases—that time, is over. A spokesperson for the member for Cottesloe, the Leader of the Liberal Party, is joining the honourable —

Point of Order

Dr D.J. HONEY: There is no spokesperson for me, and the member is —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Sorry; are you making a point of order or are you attempting to enter the debate?

Dr D.J. HONEY: No, Madam Speaker; I am saying —

The SPEAKER: What is your point of order? You cannot enter a debate. A disagreement with what the minister is saying is not a point of order.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Madam Speaker, the member is misleading the house. There is no person who speaks on my behalf other than me.

The SPEAKER: That was not a point of order.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr R.H. COOK: This particular individual identified himself as a staffer from “Dr David Honey’s office” so he is clearly attributing his comments to his position in that office. What did he say to the protesters? He said, “Well done.” While we are trying to encourage everyone to get vaccinated, this individual is encouraging protesters to undermine that effort. Once again, the test is there for the Leader of the Liberal Party. Once again, we see representatives from his corner trying to undermine the public’s effort to get people vaccinated.

The member for Cottesloe might take offence that we attribute these comments to his office, but maybe we can look to the words of Mr Ian Goodenough, MP, who, in his own social media commentary, is trying to undermine the McGowan government’s efforts to get people vaccinated. The test is here, Madam Speaker. It is time for the Leader of the Liberal Party to lead. He should stop being curtailed by the factional warriors that actually run his party, and actually lead—join the McGowan government in getting people vaccinated and protecting Western Australians. For once in your life and for once in your time in this position, stand up and be counted!

The SPEAKER: Members, just to be clear, question time is a time for questions and responses to those questions. It is not a time for debate across the chamber. Debate happens when there is a matter of public importance or when there is private members’ business or when there is a bill before the house. Points of order are not an opportunity to enter debate; points of order are for a genuine point of order. They should not be used spuriously to try to engage in debate because you disagree with something a member has said. If you want to make a personal explanation, you are entitled to do that, providing you meet the criteria. If you want to debate something, bring it on as a motion. Give us a notice of motion and an item can come on appropriately for debate. But question time is not a time for debate.