

**CORONAVIRUS — VACCINATION**

*Statement*

**HON MARTIN PRITCHARD (North Metropolitan)** [5.05 pm]: I will be quite brief. Can I say that it has been a good week and I have enjoyed many of the speeches.

I am not always very complimentary of the media. Often I believe it tries to create news rather than report it, but there was an article in *The West Australian* on Friday, 21 May, that caught my eye and I thought was so on point that I wanted to read some small snippets of it. It is by a columnist for News Corp, David Penberthy, and the article is headed “Why you should get the jab”. I would like to report at this stage that I have had my first jab and I am looking forward to the second. I will quote the article. It says —

Here’s a question. Of all the influenza vaccines, which one is your favourite? Maybe you’re a fan of the two made by the Sanofi-Aventis pharmaceutical company, Vaxigrip Tetra and FluQuadri. If it’s Vaxigrip Tetra you like, you might be just as happy taking the same version of that vaccine made by GlaxoSmithKline.

Or you might prefer the three vaccines made by the Seqirus company—Fluad Quad, Afluria Quad and Flucelvax Quad. Or maybe you’re a Mylan Health enthusiast and have their Influvac Tetra injected each year ahead of winter.

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My strong hunch is that you—like me ... had no idea that in Australia there are seven TGA-approved flu vaccines made by four companies, the comparative benefits and pitfalls of which are a blissful mystery to us non-scientific types.

Australians—especially older Australians—are overwhelmingly happy to take a flu vaccine and would never even think about ranking them by their promised benefits or purported pitfalls. We just trust the science and appreciate the advantages of having our shots.

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We don’t think twice about any of this. We enthusiastically roll up to the local GP, chemist or workplace vaccination clinic and have any old vaccine jabbed into our arm, safe in the knowledge that it’s better than coming down with a cold.

This is not the case with the coronavirus vaccines. Suddenly everyone is an immunologist. Walk into any front bar in the land and there’s a couple of blokes in high-vis debating the physiological merits of Pfizer over AstraZeneca.

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The article quoted doctors reporting a significant proportion of older people who are so concerned by the fear of blood clots with AstraZeneca that they were holding off in the hope of receiving a different vaccine.

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Please, read the stats, and trust the science. The most recent and authoritative research was done by Oxford University in March, showing recipients of AstraZeneca have a five per million chance of developing blood clots compared with four per million for Pfizer and Moderna.

I believe that of those, one in four would die from the blood clot. The article continues —

Not only is AZ staggeringly safe, Pfizer and Moderna are safer by such a tiny margin that I wonder why anyone would bother waiting.

They are all much safer than walking across a busy road. I want to highlight that there would be much more risk in changing a light bulb in our own homes or crossing a busy road. We seem to be subject to our success at abolishing COVID-19 in this state and around the country for the most part. That success has led to what is, in my view, a lot of misinformation that has heightened people’s fear about taking the vaccine. I encourage my constituents to roll up their sleeve and get vaccinated. We are now at a point at which the more we try to explain it, the more people become worried about it. Even my own mother was waiting for and hoping to get the Pfizer vaccine later in the year until I told her that the difference is between five per million as opposed to four per million. There is a ridiculously small chance of something going wrong. If something does go wrong, there is also a much smaller chance of a person dying. I encourage people in my constituency to roll up their sleeve and get the jab. Let us look after everybody, particularly our children.