

TRANSCRIPT

TUESDAY 28 APRIL 2026

Transcript: AMA Queensland President, Dr Nick Yim, ABC Brisbane, Drive with Ellen Fanning, Tuesday 28 April 2026

Subject: Flu vaccinations and public health leadership

ELLEN FANNING: For the second year running, the Premier David Crisulli has refused to publicly receive the flu jab, saying it's a private matter between him and his doctor. This was his response in Question Time last week to a jibe about the jab from the Opposition Leader, Steven Miles.

DAVID CRISAFULLI: The honourable Member wants proof of how much the side of the House backs vaccination. We've actually funded it.

REPORTER: The government has made flu jabs free for everyone over six months of age. The Premier has previously declined to reveal his vaccination status.

ELLEN FANNING: While he has apparently received this year's dose, the former Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk has taken a shot at the Premier over his reluctance to answer that very simple question: have you had the flu jab?

ANNASTACIA PALASZCZUK: Yeah. I'm shocked because as Premier I was presented with the rates of which we expected the flu season to impact on Queensland's population. They would be getting that information and they need to act on that information. It is so critical when increasing numbers of people are dying from the flu in our hospitals.

ELLEN FANNING: Is it a failure of leadership to not answer that question?

ANNASTACIA PALASZCZUK: Yes, it is.

ELLEN FANNING: Well, now the Premier's office has let it be known he has had the flu shot, but not in public and he won't come out and tell Queenslanders himself about his vaccination status. Should you care if you see the Premier rolling up his sleeve and getting the flu vaccine in public? The state's leading health body, the Australian Medical Association of Queensland, does care. Nick Yim is the President. A politician poses in front of cameras and lights and pushes up their sleeves and a nurse sticks them with the latest flu vacs. It's a fairly benign looking procedure, Nick Yim, shouldn't David Crisafulli have the right to keep it private though? Why do you and other workers want to see him do it?

DR NICK YIM: I think it's one of the key things, Ellen, is that we as health leaders, political leaders, we need to demonstrate the confidence of the influenza vaccine. Unfortunately, over the past many years there has been a decline in vaccination rates in Queensland, amongst Australia and also across the world. And unfortunately that has led to additional people getting quite unwell with influenza hospitalisations and tragically sudden deaths and also increased pressures on our public health care system. So, I think we just need to demonstrate leadership in this area.

ELLEN FANNING: Can you understand why he won't do it? Annastacia Palaszczuk was mystified. We saw Steven Miles roll up his sleeve and have the jab. The Premier keeps being asked over and over again, are you going to do it? Today he's finally released quietly to a media outlet to say, look, he has had it. Can you understand his position on this?

DR NICK YIM: Definitely. We acknowledge that healthcare issues, people, individuals definitely deserve privacy. It's one of those elements. It's definitely a voluntary act. Like, for example, I had my flu shot in front of the cameras along with my local MP in Harvey Bay.

ELLEN FANNING: But we're not asking him to have a prostate test, nobody's asking him to bend over. It's the flu jab!

DR NICK YIM: Yeah, absolutely. And this is the reason why we are calling for demonstration of leadership. And leadership is so important to highlight the evidence and safety of the influenza vaccine.

ELLEN FANNING: What's undermining the Trust? Are there enough people out there? Is there enough nonsense out there from the anti-vaxxers that is undermining vaccination rates?

DR NICK YIM: There is that element, as you alluded to. There is a lot of rubbish on social media now. Every time that you might look at TikTok or the reels on Facebook, there is someone unfortunately commenting on potentially side effects or the reasons why vaccines are conspiracy theorists. But the influenza vaccine is a very, very safe vaccine. It has been shown to reduce severity of disease and to prevent hospitalisations.

ELLEN FANNING: Okay, so I don't want to ask leading questions, but what do you think is going on? Can you say flat out, is the Premier pandering to a growing anti-vaxxer movement in Queensland?

DR NICK YIM: It's really tricky, Ellen. I don't know what's going on. It is something where that might be a question for the Premier and the government, but I think we do highlight the positives. At the same time, it's great that influenza vaccine is free for all Queenslanders. We've got the flu mist for the paediatric population and we have seen uptick of rates in that cohort, which is really positive for Queensland.

ELLEN FANNING: You're listening to Nick Yim, who sounds mystified as Annastacia Palaszczuk was as well as to why the Premier has kind of done this dance about has he or hasn't he had the flu jab confirming today his vaccination status. Yes, he has been vaccinated, but unwilling to get the jab publicly which a lot of premiers and leaders over the years have done in order to demonstrate that this is not only free but a safe vaccine. Nick Yim, the vaccination rates last year was 28%, one of the lowest rates in the country.

DR NICK YIM: Yeah and we do need to pick that up. We saw in Brisbane last year because of influenza, because of hospitalisations, elective surgeries did have to go on bypass, they had to get on hold and that additions that flow on effect on pressures on the public healthcare system, pressures on those individual patients waiting for those surgeries and we don't want to see that again this year.

ELLEN FANNING: It's interesting isn't it, this line between public health, what we do for one another, spreading the message about the necessity to do it, having leaders, which you say is important as the leading voice of AMA Queensland, come out and say look, I've done it and the right to privacy. A couple of years on the text line, Sean says "I care about his privacy, it's a personal health choice. They threw healthcare privacy out the window with COVID. So, I applaud his decision to remind you the media of his and everybody else's right to privacy". Another on the text line: "It's hard to understand the

Premier's position on the flu shot. There's enough scuttlebutt, conspiracy theories, mistrust about public health vaccines without politicians adding fuel to the fire" and yet this Nick Yim, "Vaccine's a personal medical event. He shouldn't have to tell anyone." Madge says "Mind your own business Ellen". Somebody else says "Get out of it Ellen". Just be really clear in terms of public health, why do you think leaders should be public about their vaccination, Nick?

DR NICK YIM: The key thing on public health is that these are proven tried immunisations that have been around for decades. Unfortunately, as you alluded to and by some of the comments as well, conspiracy is flowing quite wild currently with social media, with the digital trend and if there's reduced confidence amongst our leadership, obviously our population will not have the vaccination because of that lack of confidence and we need to confirm that confidence which is so important.

ELLEN FANNING: According to the Queensland Health website, 210 active flu cases in the last week. 17 in hospital already. 71% of those cases in people 65 and over. What is the prediction of how bad the flu season is likely to get if the vaccination rates stay this low?

DR NICK YIM: So, it's quite fortuitous right now, these rates of influenza. Whilst it's in community, it's relatively low levels compared to previous years. But we know that we must reach a threshold for that herd immunity to protect each other in the community. So, looking at the numbers at the moment, I guess this year across Queensland, we've had over half a million immunisations, which is great, but it's still well below what we've seen in previous years. So, last year, for example, over 600,000 year-to-date back then. So, we do have a fair bit of work to do. But the positive news is that we have seen that uptick in that paediatric population less than 5. So, I encourage and urge all Queenslanders, if they have any questions, please have a conversation with their GP about immunisations and the safety in the true evidence as opposed to looking at social media.

ELLEN FANNING: What number do you want to get to? Obviously 20%-ish vaccinations don't give us herd immunity. What number do we need to get to in terms of the percentage of Queenslanders getting the vaccine so that the vulnerable are covered.

DR NICK YIM: Upwards of 80%.

ELLEN FANNING: Geez.

DR NICK YIM: We've got a lot of work to do.

ELLEN FANNING: Oh, man. And we were 28% last year, which is why the paediatric ICUs were full. The ICUs were full of flu cases in 2025 and now we're in 2026. Nick Yim, thank you for your leadership.

DR NICK YIM: Thank you, Ellen, and thank you for your time as always.

ELLEN FANNING: Dr Nick Yim, AMAQ. "Married to a nurse," says Tim, "I feel our Premier needs to show leadership on this." Trevor at Carina says "We desperately need a vaccine for disinformation."

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