




Speech By
Deb Frecklington

MEMBER FOR NANANGO

Record of Proceedings, 17 June 2020

MOTION

Queensland Border Closure

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (5.00 pm): I move—

That this House:

1. notes the following in relation to border closures:
 - (a) the Prime Minister and Chief Medical Officer have said it is safe to open interstate borders;
 - (b) published on 8 May, the Premier's road map says that interstate travel will be permitted from 10 July;
 - (c) on 18 May that the Premier stated, 'I would say that things would look more positive towards September' and she would give people advice at the end of May;
 - (d) last year, 8.1 million interstate visitors travelled to Queensland;
 - (e) interstate travellers directly spent over \$9.2 billion in Queensland in 2019;
 - (f) the Palaszczuk government has not done economic modelling on closing the borders which the Gold Coast Central Chamber of Commerce President Martin Hall said, 'That is possibly the most ludicrous thing I have ever heard';
 - (g) Duffy Down Under Boat Hire owner Gordon Kerr, whom the Premier has met with, said last week the government was delusional to argue border closures had no impact on business;
 - (h) Dreamweavers event management Chief Operating Officer John Bond said it 'seems ridiculous other states appear to be getting on with business and Queensland isn't';
 - (i) Gold Coast restaurant owner Nuccia Fusco said 'that is not protecting Queenslanders at all by keeping them out of work, on the streets and desperate for money'; and
2. condemns the Premier for her mixed messages and thought bubbles on the reopening of the interstate border that has closed business and cost jobs across Queensland.

Quite seriously, we have flattened the curve. Now the Palaszczuk government needs to stop flattening the economy. It is really quite simple. The Premier of Queensland and the Deputy Premier of Queensland need to stop sending mixed messages. Stop the chaos and the confusion of the mixed messages going out to businesses in relation to the border closure. The people of Queensland deserve to have the borders open again. Like I said, we have flattened the curve, so I say to the Premier: stop flattening the economy.

I want to talk a bit about the mixed messages. I think it was on 8 May that the Premier decided to announce that interstate travel would be allowed back into Queensland mid-July. That is what the Premier said. She went out and said, 'This is the proposal. If all goes well with the health system, we will reopen the borders mid-July.' When I visited Laura Gerber's area with her, I met Jim at Noodle Box who talked about the certainty that that announcement gave him around the employment of his staff. He had something to look forward to, like the many businesses up and down the coast that were aiming to get people across the borders for the June-July school holidays.

Then 10 days later the Premier went on morning television. We had noticed that the Premier had not been on morning television quite so much since making a few bungles, but the Premier was all empowered and she went on morning television. She forgot about the people of Queensland. She forgot

about the economic impact on people and she forgot about the health and livelihoods of people across Queensland when she said, 'The borders should stay shut until September or even later.' That sent shock waves through the tourism industry across Queensland. The Premier's mixed messages need to be condemned because they are hurting people. They are taking away livelihoods and they have the potential, if they have not already, to take lives. It is an awful situation for the tourism industry across this great state of ours.

It was excellent to hear today that, due to the lack of economic modelling from the Palaszczuk government, the federal government will step in. Once again, due to no leadership, particularly no economic leadership, from the Palaszczuk government, the federal Treasurer had to step in and say, 'The Palaszczuk government won't do economic modelling on the borders staying closed, so we will have to.' The federal Treasurer today announced that the economic boom that will come to Queensland when the Premier eventually decides to open the borders again will be \$653 million a month.

The people of Queensland have done the right thing. They have followed the rules. Now it is time for the Premier of Queensland to start listening to them—the people whose livelihoods rely upon the border closure decision. When I was in Cairns with the deputy leader the other day there were tourism operators there who were so distressed because not only have they lost the July school holiday bookings but they are now threatened to lose the September bookings. Unfortunately, the winners of this situation are the tourism operators across the border because the people who were going to spend their money in Queensland have now booked holidays in New South Wales.

I love the old adage 'We make it great in the Sunshine State'. You will hear a lot more about that in the coming months. I would love to say, 'It is now time to open the gate to the Sunshine State.' We need to get those tourism dollars flowing back into Queensland. It is about time the people of Queensland had their say. It is about time the Premier of Queensland actually listened to the people of Queensland and stopped worrying about her own job.