



Speech By  
**James Lister**


**MEMBER FOR SOUTHERN DOWNS**

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## ADJOURNMENT

### Southern Downs Electorate, Queensland Border Closure

 **Mr LISTER** (Southern Downs—LNP) (7.07 pm): I rise to speak in the House tonight about the matter of the border closure. In my electorate of Southern Downs we have 400 kilometres of border country stretching from Killarney to just short of Mungindi. In the last couple of days my office—my staff and I—have been inundated with concerns from residents on both sides of the border, not just from my constituents but from those who live on the other side of the border in New South Wales and for whom Queensland is their community of interest.

We have had complaints from a tyre shop proprietor, Betsy Turner, who is unable to reach places like North Star and Croppa Creek, where she sells tyres, and from a veterinary surgeon in Killarney, David Thomson, who has clients throughout the area on the other side of the border. It is calving season and he cannot reach Bonalbo and some of the communities that he needs to reach because those postcodes are not included in the bubble along the border. Another one that springs to mind is Greg Carey, who runs Carey Bros Abattoir. His premises are just outside one of the postcode locations which are exempted along the border. Some of his staff work in Yangon but come from just across the border. These restrictions are proving very difficult for business, for families and for ordinary workers as they try to go about their daily business.

I support and understand the necessity of closing the borders. It is something that I think most people in Southern Downs would understand. What I would like to see is an expansion of the bubble, as we put it, in the country areas that I represent. On the southern Gold Coast and Tweed we are talking about a bubble of several postcodes deep—maybe 100 kilometres from end to end—where people can cross the border backwards and forwards. What I would like to see is an expansion of the area deeper into New South Wales and deeper into Queensland. We are talking about areas which are much less dense in terms of population and I think would be significantly less risky than the urbanised areas which are currently covered closer to the coast.

I have spoken with the Goondiwindi Regional Council. I understand that they and their local chamber of commerce, and also the Balonne council, have expressed to the government a request that the border zone be expanded to incorporate an entire local government area on both sides of the border. I have earlier today written to the Premier asking for an expansion to 50 kilometres and any postcode which is touched by that. I think the proposal by the council seems quite sensible and easy to enforce.

Those who are struggling with the closures are not asking for the border to be opened. They just want a fair go because in country areas people need to travel a lot further than a few kilometres from either side of the border. The economic impacts are very hard on businesses that have already struggled with drought. They employ people and pay taxes to pay for politicians and pay for all of the things that we scrutinise in this House.