



Speech By  
**Julianne Gilbert**


**MEMBER FOR MACKAY**

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Record of Proceedings, 16 June 2020

**MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

**Coronavirus, Economic Response**

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (2.30 pm): It has been interesting listening to those opposite talk about opening up the borders. I understand that they have been out talking to people who are saying, 'Open up the borders.' Every time the opposition are in the media saying, 'Let's get those borders open,' the phone in my office rings off the hook. A lot of people ring and say, 'I've never voted Labor in my life but I will be now because the opposition are trying to bully the Premier into opening the borders.' They do not want people coming to Queensland before they feel confident that they are not going to become unwell from having visitors. Maybe when those opposite are out on the road they need to talk to everyone, not just to those people who will give them the message they want to hear. There are a lot of people out there with a different opinion.

My region has been working its way out of COVID-19 hibernation. As we know, the virus has ripped its way through the economy, not just in my region but around the world. We are ready to come out of hibernation. We know that our region can lead the charge in getting back to having a good economy in Queensland. We can only do this because the Palaszczuk Labor government has a plan and is focused on the future. We are ready to unite and recover. We will do this by developing our manufacturing industry and ensuring that it continues to thrive. We want to diversify our economy in Mackay. We can do this with confidence because we have always had our eye on the future. We are going to come out of this pandemic and hit the ground running.

The Premier and Treasurer both visited my electorate last week. Neither of them stayed just the half an hour that those opposite have said. They spent a lot of time talking to a lot of different business people and to the mayors. They listened carefully to what was being said. We want to make sure that the projects that we support in our economic stimulus are those projects that are going to build economic stability and growth plus put locals into jobs. We want all of them to get the tick.

My region, like all regions in Queensland, has benefited from the \$800 million stimulus roll-out to businesses to maintain staff. As of yesterday, 104 businesses in the Mackay Regional Council footprint had accessed COVID-19 Jobs Support Loans to keep locals employed and to keep their doors open. They are ready to kickstart our recovery.

Travel Associates is just one of these businesses. Debbie Rains has been able to keep all 35 of her staff employed across their outlets. Dirk from Jayden Enterprises has kept his 16 tradies in work. He said that without his COVID-19 Jobs Support Loan he would not have been able to keep all of his workers and vans on the road. Without that money, he would have had to consider which of his employees he stood down. That is 16 families in my region from Dirk's business alone who have been able to stay in work. More than \$7 million of payroll tax has been refunded to 312 businesses across the wider region of Mackay. This refund has given small to medium sized business much needed cash flow that will keep local families in work.

One constant topic of conversation in my region since the COVID-19 outbreak is the need to bring more manufacturing into our region and to diversify our economy. We do not want to just recover; we want to come back stronger and more resilient. We want our economy based on building a future for our kids. Mackay has all the raw resources—water, power and land. We have a strong METS sector. Our manufacturing hub at Paget is world leading in mining innovation. We export around the world. It is the Palaszczuk government that has a plan. It is going to lead us into the future.