




Speech By
Kim Richards

MEMBER FOR REDLANDS

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ADJOURNMENT

Redlands Electorate, Coronavirus

 **Ms RICHARDS** (Redlands—ALP) (2.20 pm): My Redlands community is very strong and, of necessity, it is also very resilient, particularly within the island communities. Working together we will concur whatever COVID-19 has to throw at our community. I know that by being calm and thoughtful we can be prepared but measured in how we approach this. A really important message to put out across all of our communities is that we need to be thoughtful while planning ahead.

We have seen the frenzy going on in supermarkets, which has a knock-on effect. I have been talking with the chairman of our local Meals on Wheels. They have really big concerns around the supply chain, which is directly impacted by people stockpiling. Queensland has plenty of supply and we should not be stockpiling, as it has very significant unintended consequences. In our community in particular, we have a very high percentage of elderly and ageing people who need access to services and supplies. For that reason, I ask everybody to be measured in how they approach planning ahead.

This is a time for checking in with your neighbours, which is what strong communities do. From my office and from community organisations with which I have spoken over the past few years I know that we are doing that; we are looking out for each other. I make particular reference to our southern Moreton Bay islands. At the moment before the House there is an online e-petition that looks at the reclassification of the islands from 'metropolitan' to more 'regional and remote', as the only way that you can get there is by ferry or barge. As members can imagine, with COVID-19 and the potential that it has, there are concerns around access to medical services and hospitals. There are concerns for the 250 students who attend high schools on the mainland. There are concerns around access to groceries and supplies, as well as the gathering of people. Those are all important things that are being considered.

I have been really pleased with all of the conversations I have had with different organisations. I have spoken with SeaLink and TransLink. I know that their pandemic planning is well underway. They are enacting it as we speak. The Queensland ambulance ferry, the Kitty Kat, moves people backward and forward. Planning and preparing for how that resource will be utilised is underway. I have spoken with the supermarkets as well, which are really important suppliers to the islands as well as the mainland. I have also spoken with our chamber of commerce. It is really important that all levels of government look at the casualisation of the workforce and what that means. There is a lot of fear around that, so from an economic stimulus point of view it is really important to look at that. Our Redland Hospital is doing a fantastic job and I thank all staff, too.