




Speech By
Laura Gerber

MEMBER FOR CURRUMBIN

Record of Proceedings, 17 June 2020

MOTION

Queensland Border Closure

 **Mrs GERBER** (Currumbin—LNP) (5.10 pm): I rise this afternoon to support the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition. The Palaszczuk Labor government has shown time and again that it is out of step with ordinary Queenslanders when it comes to the border. Since the Premier handed down her road map we have had nothing but thought bubbles and mixed messages around when the border will reopen. This is costing us jobs, this is causing businesses to close down and this is decimating the people of my electorate of Currumbin.

The road map clearly states that interstate travel can proceed on 10 July. Then in a thought bubble the Premier plucked September out of the air, and now she is saying that it depends on the health advice. Let's talk about the health advice for a minute. The facts of the health advice are that on 22 May the Deputy Chief Medical Officer, Paul Kelly, said there was no medical reason for Australians to be stopped from travelling interstate and that the federal government never advised the border to be closed.

Mr Power interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, member for Logan! You are on the speaking list. You will have your chance in a second.

Mrs GERBER: This week in this parliament the Premier said that the majority are telling her they want the border to stay shut. I am out in my community every day. I am talking with the locals and I am talking with business owners. It is my job to be a voice for my community, and what my community is telling me is that the borders need to open. If the Premier thinks the borders need to be shut then I have something to say about that. In my electorate, those who want the border open outnumber those who want it shut by a majority of over 10 to one. People in my community feel that the Palaszczuk Labor government is playing politics with their lives and their livelihoods.

Just last week in the High Court lawyers for the Palaszczuk Labor government got up and said that the border closure is not causing financial hardship to the businesses of Currumbin. Well, let me talk about some of the businesses in my electorate that are suffering severe financial hardship as a result of the closure. First we have Strand Fresh Fruit, a local fruit and vegie man in Coolangatta on the Strand. When I visited him during the by-election he was thriving. He is now closed and he is not reopening. Those are Queensland jobs lost; those are local jobs lost. I will move on to Max and Maree, the mum-and-dad operators of the management rights at the Ocean Plaza Resort in Coolangatta. Their bookings dropped by 80 per cent. Even with JobKeeper they were losing over \$50,000 a month. That is just not sustainable. Then there is Jim, whom the Leader of the Opposition talked about. Jim is the owner of a local Noodle Box franchise. He lost a significant amount of business when the border closed and he has not been able to get it back. His store is situated just metres from the New South Wales border, and many of his customers will not even order his delicious noodles via Uber Eats because they are afraid it cannot get across the border.

Then there is Amanda, the owner of Hair Colour Cafe. She is worried about her business when the borders reopen because as a hairdresser her clientele depends on repeat business. Her clients have had to find other hairdressers. That is business she has lost. That is business she now has to work twice as hard to regain. She is suffering. Then there is Dino from Xenia. He owns a restaurant in Coolangatta and one just across the border in New South Wales. He spoke to me about how restrictive Queensland's rules are in comparison to New South Wales and how confusing it was for him to get it right in both of his different restaurants and how Queensland's restrictions are hurting him financially.

Under the LNP, businesses like Jim's Noodle Box and Amanda's hair salon would not be suffering as they are under Labor, because the LNP had a road map that allowed people who live within 100 kilometres of the border to travel freely provided they complied with the health advice. This is because the LNP understands businesses on the southern end of the Gold Coast. It understands that businesses depend on the border trade. These are just a few examples of the many businesses in Currumbin that are suffering as a result of the border closure and the financial hardship that is being put on them as a result of the Palaszczuk Labor government's decisions.