




Speech By
Leanne Linard

MEMBER FOR NUDGE

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Nudgee Electorate, Coronavirus

 **Ms LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (2.29 pm): I rise to speak to the incredible strength and resilience of my local community and indeed of all Queenslanders in the face of the health and economic challenge of COVID-19. As the Premier said so aptly, never has there been an event in our history which has had such a dramatic and sudden effect. It has taken lives and it has taken livelihoods. It has had a dramatic effect on people's way of life, on local business and industry, and on people's peace of mind. Equally, it has called out tremendous resilience and innovation with respect to how our community operates and cares for one another.

Across my electorate, I have seen local businesses pivot: Triple Eight Race Engineering pivot from building V8 race cars to ventilators, Perfect Potion pivot from manufacturing aromatherapy products to much needed hand sanitiser, bustling cafes pivot to takeaway and home-delivery services, and personal trainers pivot from group sessions to virtual businesses, to name just a few. Small business, indeed business generally, has been incredibly adaptive. I take this opportunity to give those businesses mentioned—and all businesses across my electorate—a sincere shout-out, as I have been throughout this pandemic, by encouraging our local community to rally around them and support local.

However, as quickly as the pandemic turned our way of life upside down, the recovery will be more gradual in nature. It will take time to restore the jobs and economic activity that was lost due to the need to follow COVID-19 restrictions. It is sobering to acknowledge that in just a single month we have lost over half of the gains we made in employment since our election in 2015. Unemployment is now the highest it has been since October 2014 when the LNP was last in government, but our government was elected on a platform of creating jobs and getting Queensland back on its feet after the former LNP government took it to its knees, and we will rebuild once again after this pandemic.

Before COVID-19, Queensland had an economy growing faster than the nation at 2½ per cent and we delivered five budget surpluses. Independent ratings agency Moody's said last month that their stable outlook for Queensland 'reflects our expectation that the state's large economy will remain resilient in the face of coronavirus related disruptions'.

Vital to that resilience is a clear strategy and recovery plan moving forward. The \$880 million Unite and Recover for Queensland Jobs plan released this week by the Premier is focused on kickstarting our economy and getting Queenslanders back to work. Chief among the initiatives contained in this plan is another \$100 million to support small businesses with grants of up to \$10,000 to help them get to the other side of this pandemic. We are also committing another \$20 million to give access to free online training to assist with reskilling and to get people back to work. These initiatives are on top of the \$6 billion we have provided to date to manage the health response and support business. Now is the time for governments at all levels to step up and invest in infrastructure. It is about keeping Queenslanders in jobs and creating new jobs, and we are up to the task.