




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR LOGAN

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**JUSTICE AND OTHER LEGISLATION (COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE)
AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (4.40 pm): Today I rise because I want to recognise the extremely fantastic job that the people of Queensland have done in reducing the incidence of COVID-19. It is amazing that today we are seeing a record number of people across the world being diagnosed with COVID-19 whereas in contrast Queensland had zero cases today. It is extraordinary that we have that contrast. The Chief Health Officer, Dr Jeannette Young, the Premier and our health minister have given good advice which they have communicated very well. They have communicated their advice very clearly. The real congratulations should go absolutely to the people of Queensland because they are the ones who have been responsible, careful and conservative about the role that they have in keeping other people safe.

An honourable member: It's a good way to be.

Mr POWER: It is a good way to be when it comes to this disease and the changes we have had to make, and I will return to that. The member for Toowoomba South said that we should be conservative about things like border closures and such measures. It is really important that we are conservative about these things, we are careful about these things and we are judicious about these things or else we might see in Queensland what has happened in other parts of the world. I congratulate every Queenslander who has stuck together and cared for every other Queenslander. We still have a long way to go, but our work means that there is light at the end of the tunnel. Every Queenslander for the most part knows—well, I did hear the member for Broadwater earlier—that we must have a unified voice, collectively backing up and following the Chief Health Officer's carefully thought out advice. That is the path to keeping Queenslanders alive, minimising transmission and, really importantly, getting back to work by opening up steadily and continually without having to go backwards.

I want to especially congratulate Logan residents. The impact on those without savings and job security and with insecure housing is so much more than others in secure situations. Many of them do not have the large house in a leafy suburb where a job can easily be accommodated through online white-collar work, and I myself feel fortunate. The problems of casualisation and insecure work have disproportionately hurt Logan residents, yet Logan residents have endured because they care for our community and they are willing to go through what is right to get our community through. I am proud of Logan and proud that we have worked together to do so well.

I want to recognise workers. Our Prime Minister said that every worker is essential. We have to recognise the doctors, the nurses, the hospital cleaners—in fact, every hospital worker—the paramedics, the police, the contract tracers and every single public servant down to the person who works in the TMR office who is helping people keep their cars registered and on the road. Every single public servant continues to go out and serve the public. Those public servants are either dealing with people on the front line or are dealing with the people who are dealing with other people on the front line. I want to respectfully acknowledge the public servants who work in this place. They have had to go above and beyond and do extra duties and be extra careful for this institution and we respect what

they have done. I also want to recognise those who work outside of government in retail dealing with an anxious public such as the hardware store owners who have had to do that extra work for people to queue up in their stores. There are so many Queenslanders who have taken on extra responsibilities in order to keep their communities safe.

I want to recognise the fact that in this bill emergency measures have to be agile in response to incredibly rapid change. In the absence of the COVID-19 emergency, we would have much more time to consider these issues, but now is the time for action, and that is what we have done. The comprehensive nature of the effect of COVID-19 means that the bill has to be a comprehensive response that rightly has to deal with many acts across government, and I want to note a few of them. Firstly, when I heard the Minister for Industrial Relations speaking about building workers and others' long service, I thought of the crew that was out—the Minister for Main Roads might be interested in this—on Friday night operating the cranes to put in the 56 girders that are going to make up the new bridge over Jimboomba Creek. They were working in the night—carefully, safely, with distancing—but they do not know where their next job is coming from. I know that we have a government that is backing them with investment in roads, but some of the measures in this bill are important if some of those workers have only been working for, say, seven years or even less. If those workers have that financial need, we have put mechanisms in place so they can reach out and access some of their long service leave to keep them going.

While the Minister for Transport is in the House I want to acknowledge the huge new investment on the Mount Lindesay Highway to keep people in work. At the moment there is four-laning occurring—and the member for Scenic Rim would recognise this great work—from Rosia Road through to beyond Stoney Camp Road. In a joint investment we have added an extra \$37.5 million to take four lanes beyond that all the way to Chambers Flat Road. That is a project that makes a real difference to the people on that corridor and is something that also provides jobs for people who can do this in a COVID safe way.

This bill gives the police the power to order a COVID test by way of amendment to the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act. If a court has determined that a COVID test is warranted, people can be tested. That is really important when police are in a dangerous situation if someone has done something that has endangered one of our public servants. There are changes to the Liquor Act that recognise some of the severe restrictions on licensed premises during this crisis. The bill makes changes to the manufactured homes act. The mechanisms that we have put in place—and, Mr Deputy Speaker, I know you know very well about some of the difficulties that manufactured home residents have had during this crisis—will ensure that that act can work smoothly at a time when often elderly residents will have trouble being able to go through the full process.

During this viral pandemic I am reminded that both our economic wellbeing and our health are not up to a single individual—not the Chief Health Officer, not the Premier, not one single individual at all. Instead, they are collective. If we are to be able to continue to do everything that we want to do outside of our homes, then we depend collectively on every Queenslander to keep every other Queenslander safe. Every Queenslander can know that this government has listened to the best advice and has not hesitated to communicate the message and act together for all Queenslanders. It is we together who will beat this COVID-19 virus.

I can't but reflect on some of the things that the member for Broadwater said. He spoke about what was in the road map. The road map has three points at which we will review the border. It says we will do it at every stage. It clearly says we will do that review because we want to keep Queenslanders safe. He spoke about people from the cape to Coolangatta who were looking for New South Wales bookings. He must know, because he has read our road map and would have read New South Wales' road map which makes it absolutely clear, that people cannot travel for holiday purposes more than 250 kilometres. I know he was once from Townsville—now he likes to claim something different—but the member for Broadwater should know that there is not a mass market that is immediately south of the border. People from Kingscliff are not going to cross the border to Coolangatta.

Ms Gerber: Yes, they do!

Mr POWER: For tourism purposes and accommodation? Residents of Kingscliff come up to the Gold Coast? That is a major market? We are seeing supreme ignorance from the new member who thinks that the major market for tourism in Surfers Paradise or Coolangatta is people from Kingscliff. Amazing!

Immediately north of the city of the Gold Coast is the City of Logan, which has great attractions, and Brisbane, which also has great things to do, but we do not have the fantastic beaches that the Gold Coast has. We would love to be able to travel, as soon as it is safe, and to take up those bookings. The member for Broadwater needs to be honest with tourism operators. He needs to understand that in the

immediate vicinity of Northern New South Wales there are so many beaches to visit. We need to have a Queenslanders backing Queenslanders campaign for tourism to get hundreds of thousands of people from Brisbane, Logan, the Moreton Bay region and Ipswich, down to Surfers Paradise to enjoy everything that is there in a safe and COVID-responsible way. What we do not need is people spreading misinformation, people telling tourism operators things that are simply not true and pretending to Gold Coast operators that all of their market is somehow from Yamba, Kingscliff or Byron. That is clearly farcical. What we will have is a great deal of people from Brisbane and Logan who will be listening to our Chief Health Officer and going to the Gold Coast and doing it safely. I know tourism operators will do it safely. Tourism will pick up steadily and incrementally because that is the safe way to do it. That is the way to do it so that we do not go backwards. We will continue to back our businesses. I endorse the bill.