




Speech By
Hon. Mark Ryan

MEMBER FOR MORAYFIELD

Record of Proceedings, 13 August 2020

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Coronavirus, Quarantine

 **Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Minister for Corrective Services) (10.06 am): I can update the House on the latest in relation to a person who absconded from hotel quarantine in Toowoomba. Upon being returned to custody yesterday this person was subjected to another COVID-19 test. I am advised that test has come back negative. The male was subsequently charged for breaching COVID-19 quarantine requirements. His bail was refused yesterday and he was remanded in watch house custody to appear in court today. I want to make it well known to everyone that the police take these matters very, very seriously, and anyone who breaches quarantine will feel the full force of the law.

Never before has our community witnessed an emergency like the one we are experiencing. Twin threats, economic and health, are inextricably linked, which at first glance appear to ask us to make an impossible choice. Queensland has carefully navigated its way through this unprecedented challenge using common sense and the best advice to a position that balances these seemingly competing imperatives. Queensland has a plan to protect the health of Queenslanders and the health of our economy, and that balancing act begins on the front line: our borders.

The Queensland Police Service is our first line of defence, and along with our partner agencies the Queensland police officers on border duty and at our airports are helping prevent the spread of COVID-19. It is what our police do; they are keeping the community safe. That border work also has another important benefit. Right now when you look around Australia, Queensland is in an enviable situation both in terms of health and the state of our economy. With negligible community transmission of the virus, Queenslanders are able to go about their daily business relatively unimpeded. There are no virus hotspots in Queensland. Queenslanders can travel freely about their state. This is in sharp contrast to places where the virus is rampant. In Queensland, in many important ways it is closer to business as usual, and an important reason why Queensland is in that position is because of those police officers on our borders. They are protecting the health of Queenslanders and protecting Queensland jobs.

It has not been easy for our police. There have been times when the border restrictions have been unpopular, despite them being in everyone's interest. Police have borne the brunt of the disgruntlement, but people in other places have seen what can happen if you let your guard down. The tide has turned. It is now clear to everyone that the work police are doing on our borders is imperative. It is imperative for the safety of Queenslanders and it is imperative for the sake of Queensland jobs. Our police are doing outstanding work on our borders and we owe them a debt of gratitude.