




Speech By
Melissa McMahon

MEMBER FOR MACALISTER

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ADJOURNMENT

Macalister Electorate, Coronavirus

 **Mrs McMAHON** (Macalister—ALP) (6.09 pm): Like many business throughout Australia and around the world, Macalister businesses have had a pretty tough few months. Earlier in the year I spoke about how eerily quiet the main street of Beenleigh was during the height of the pandemic here, but I know our tradies were still out on the tools, hardware stores and nurseries in particular did a roaring trade and our largest private employer, the Teys Bros abattoir, was going above and beyond to ensure that their production and, therefore, their jobs were not jeopardised. However, the impact on our hospitality and retail sectors was significant. In an urbanised old country town such as Beenleigh, the pubs, clubs and RSL are still the lifeblood of the community. They are the foundation stones in communities such as mine. As tough as it was, we know the closures were necessary and they do, too. It was those measures and the amazing work of our communities to comply with social distancing, to stay local and to stay safe that has put us in the position of being able to reopen and reimagine some of our local businesses.

It was with great anticipation that the pubs and clubs reopened on 10 July. At the Beenleigh bowls club the queue was down the street before 12.00. Many had been knocking on the door before that, having heard that 10 July was D-day but not realising the noon kick-off. Our pubs and clubs opened their doors and I did what any hardworking elected official would do: I went to meet people and gauge their reactions. Of course, I was very thorough. I attended quite a few venues and met with managers, bar staff and patrons. Obviously a few orders were made at the various bars to ensure offerings were up to scratch. In all seriousness, from speaking to the staff I know that they were nervous about opening. Even they admitted that they were a bit rusty, but they all agreed that it was great to be back at work.

Most patrons were very understanding about how the service at their local had to change to meet COVID-safe requirements. As I did at that time, I implore patrons at all of our venues to be patient and to work with the staff. Yes, some things have changed. Some ways of ordering are different. In many cases, the service may be a bit slower. However, those changes are necessary to ensure the health and safety of patrons and Queensland more broadly. Please do not take out your frustrations at the changes on the staff. They are doing their job. They are thankful to still have a job, but they know that by turning up to work every day and being on the front line of the service industry, their attendance at work places them at risk unless everyone follows the guidelines. As I have said, we are really happy to have our pubs and clubs opened, but I ask customers to please respect the staff, social distance and do not make their time at work any more anxious than it needs to be. In that way, we can stay open.