




Speech By
Michael Hart

MEMBER FOR BURLEIGH

Record of Proceedings, 17 June 2020

MOTION

Queensland Border Closure

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (5.31 pm): All we heard from the member for Townsville just then was 'if, if, if'. Before I came into the chamber I was talking on the phone to Sonia in Port Douglas. She is not wondering 'if'. When she wanders around Port Douglas she tells me there is nobody to be seen. There is no 'if' about it; Port Douglas has ground to a halt because the state borders are closed. At this time of the year they would be expecting a lot of people to come from interstate and have a holiday in Port Douglas. Obviously she is calling a member from South-East Queensland because she cannot get any results from the Labor members for Cook and Barron River. She is getting no feedback whatsoever from them.

People know there is a problem when the Gold Coast chamber of commerce writes to the mayor of the Gold Coast—about an hour ago—and says—

The current state of the Gold Coast business community is terminal. After a prolonged downturn which has suffocated our economy, the border opening while still uncertain will miss the school holiday window of opportunity for many businesses.

Business survival is now almost too far out of reach for many ...

I electronically table that document.

Tabled paper: Letter, undated, from the President, Gold Coast Chamber of Commerce, Mr Martin Hall, to the Mayor of the Gold Coast City Council, Cr Tom Tate, titled 'City of Gold Coast response to COVID-19 crisis' [918].

Last week I had a billboard erected on Bermuda Street in my electorate. It states, 'Planes = jobs. Open the borders'. I did that because I had numerous calls from friends of mine who work at the Gold Coast Airport. For the information of members, I worked at that airport for 10 years and I worked for an airline for 20 years; I know how airlines work. When we start thinking about getting airlines flying, I can tell honourable members that they need to have baggage handlers. They need to organise pilots and engineers. They need refuellers to put some fuel in the aeroplanes. They need air traffic controllers, security guards in the airport, people doing check-in—there is a whole lot of things they need to do, so I thought I would see how the airlines felt about this.

I had a look at Virgin flights on 13 July which, to my surprise, is a couple of days after the date listed on the road map that was put out—10 July. Virgin had listed 13 flights a day flying into the Gold Coast. How do they know? Maybe a little Whistler friend whispered in their ear. After all, they have quite a few Whistler friends! I thought that was suspicious enough, and the *Gold Coast Bulletin* ran an article about that, which I will electronically table as well.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Gold Coast Bulletin*, dated 11 June 2020, titled 'Sydney, Victoria flights into Gold Coast soar despite border closure' [919].

I looked yesterday and there were still 13 flights into the Gold Coast on Virgin.

Mr Stevens: Wait for July.

Mr HART: I say to the member for Mermaid Beach that I looked today and there are now only three. I wonder if the phone has been ringing hot again to those Whistler friends informing them what is going on. We know the Minister for Tourism has been talking to the airlines. What has she been telling them? That is what is upsetting the people on the Gold Coast: there is absolutely no clarity here at all. We just heard from the health minister. I would not want to put words in his mouth but I am sure he said, 'We decided that the Chief Health Officer would open the borders on 10 July subject to a review at the end of the month.' The government is deciding when to tell the Chief Health Officer to open the borders. Apparently, that is the case.

We know at the federal level there has been absolutely no case put forward for the borders to be closed, but, never mind, we will close them anyway. I will table those two documents with the Virgin flight details.

Tabled paper. Documents showing flight details from Sydney to the Gold Coast [\[920\]](#).

What people want is clarity. They just want clarity. They do not want the flip-flopping that we have been seeing from the Premier and her ministers over the last few days where the Premier comes out and says, 'Maybe 10 July, maybe sometime in September, maybe never.' What are the rules that the Premier has put in place to open our borders? What are they? Give the people of the Gold Coast some clarity. That is all they are asking for: some clarity so they can get back to work. Just tell us the rules. Tell us what they are and give us a date.