




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR SOUTHPORT

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

 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (4.52 pm): I rise to speak in respect of the Justice and Other Legislation (COVID-19 Emergency Response) Amendment Bill. What a wonderful presentation we heard from the member for Logan who has the audacity to stand in the House and suggest that the LNP is spreading misinformation about the tourism industry. I am not sure about other members, but I am a little bit confused about this issue of the border and when it is and is not going to be opened or closed.

Mr Power interjected.

Mr MOLHOEK: I am still waiting for some clarity from the government in respect of when the border will be opened. Equally I am quite confused about what we are meant to be doing come June and July with our holidays. What I think I heard this morning was the Premier and the member for Cooper a little bit at odds talking about the great opportunities to go sightseeing and touring around Queensland and there will be so much to do within our own state—and I completely agree with that as a concept—but my understanding is we were not allowed to travel for more than 150 kilometres. I actually received a text message from someone shortly after question time this morning saying ‘Hang on, I thought we were not allowed to travel for more than 150 kilometres and we could not stay overnight if we travel anywhere within the south-east’. The same person sent me a text message saying, ‘I am out in the regions and I thought we can’t travel more than 500 kilometres so that means I can probably go to Barcaldine for a holiday, but I can’t actually drive from Central Queensland to Rockhampton’.

Queenslanders are looking for some clarity because there is confusion. I applaud some of the intentions of this bill. There are some great amendments and recommendations in the bill that we will be supporting, but Queenslanders are looking for a clear road map that they can understand that will deliver hope, some excitement and a sense that there is a future. In today’s *Gold Coast Bulletin*—and I am happy to table the article—the latest statistics indicate that the Gold Coast will suffer more than any other region in Australia and within Queensland in terms of unemployment.

Tabled paper: Media article, undated, titled “‘Worst hit’ city in whole country” [813](#).

In case the member for Logan and others missed it, tourism is the lifeblood of the Gold Coast. In many respects it is also the lifeblood of South-East Queensland. In fact, it is the lifeblood of most of coastal Queensland. I find it difficult to understand how the Premier and her colleagues have not got that very simple and important fact. Today I have received a few emails from constituents in my electorate. I thought I would take a moment to share some of their comments. The first one is from a mother who sent this email to me this morning—

We should be reopening borders in July. There will be far more suicides a day than coronavirus cases if they leave our tourism lifeblood closed for much longer. Enough is enough. Everyone has been so obedient and it has paid off. But now our numbers are nearly non-existent and we have the capacity and readiness to tackle new cases as they arise.

Even the member for Logan said Queenslanders have done a great job. He is actually agreeing with my constituent. If we have done such a great job why is it that the Premier and the government want to continue to punish us by keeping our businesses shut down and prohibiting people from travelling and enjoying everything that the Gold Coast and Queensland has to offer? Another constituent sent me this email—

Let's get this border open. We are sitting ducks. Not what Queenslanders do!!

I will read another comment from one of my local clubs on the Gold Coast. I will not say which one because I want to respect their right to anonymity—

Who is in charge, the premier or the health spokesperson? The public servants are still paid but not the hard working people of Queensland. Borders must be open but with strict health guidelines for business and community but we need the southern visitors to survive. The earlier with safety guidelines the better.

Mr Power interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Whiting): Order! Member for Logan, we have been fairly tolerant so far, but next time it will be a warning.

Mr MOLHOEK: All we are simply asking for is a road map to recovery not a roadblock to recovery. That is essentially what we are getting from this government. What we also need from this government is leadership. I find it fascinating that Queensland is the only state that has not formally adopted in some way, shape or form, the code of conduct in respect of leased properties for commercial businesses. That is a wonderful issue! There is so much confusion out there in the marketplace about what is right, what is fair, what can I do, I have heard that there is this code of conduct. I didn't realise that Queensland has not adopted it. There are many mum-and-dad small businesses and family investors as well who are taking a hit because they have tenants who in some cases are saying that there are these rules and we do not have to abide by those, we do not have to support some code of conduct that the Queensland government has not at least adopted or been prepared to acknowledge. What we are seeing is chaos and an incredible lack of leadership from those on the other side of the House.

I could go on and on about some of the failures that we have seen in recent months. Like my colleagues and so many others, I am incredibly saddened by this very challenging time that we live in. Queenslanders have done the right thing. They have worked hard. The Gold Coast needs a fair go. We have seen mayhem at the border these last eight weeks or so, with families from New South Wales who work in Queensland and Queensland families who work in New South Wales having to line up at roadblocks every other day and get special permits. We are all Australians. I think Northern New South Wales residents and Southern Queensland residents deserve to be able to move around freely. I simply ask that the Premier and the government review this road map to recovery and that they step up and treat the Gold Coast and our incredible tourism industry with a little bit more respect, care and kindness.