




Speech By
Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe

MEMBER FOR SANDGATE

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ADJOURNMENT

Coronavirus, Palaszczuk Labor Government Response

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Local Government, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (7.21 pm): In June 1919 in Longreach, my great-grandfather died of the effects of the Spanish flu. That pandemic wreaked havoc across the globe and in Western Queensland Bill Heckenberg's death at the age of 33 left a widow and six children, including my grandmother. Their lives were forever changed. Bill was one of 21 souls who died of influenza in Longreach alone and hundreds more were hospitalised in that relatively small community.

One hundred years on, in the face of another deadly pandemic, this government has worked incredibly hard to tackle the novel coronavirus and protect Queenslanders, especially the most vulnerable, all the while preparing to restart our economy. We need not look to the past to see the benefits of our actions. We can make direct overseas comparisons. For example, like Queensland Norway has a population of five million. Norway has experienced 9,648 COVID cases and 256 deaths. Ireland, with 4.9 million people, has had 27,000 cases and 1,772 deaths. Through our timely and effective action, and with the support and cooperation of Queenslanders, so far we have avoided such terrible statistics.

We have remained tough on our borders, enforced draconian health directives and began a mass public education program on the dangers of COVID-19 and how individuals can prevent its spread. The government worked quickly to flatten the curve, listening to the Chief Health Officer, Dr Jeannette Young, on the borders and so many other issues. Meanwhile, during the midst of a pandemic the Leader of the Opposition and those opposite began a political campaign to open the borders. Rather than listen to the experts, the Leader of the Opposition was more focused on political pointscoring than the lives of Queenslanders. In essence, the 31 October election will be about the experience of our team and the risk of those opposite. This election will also determine our state's economic recovery.

It is only members on this side of the House who support a plan to unite and recover for Queensland jobs. For example, recently I met with a handful of local small businesses that have received support under the Palaszczuk government's \$100 million Small Business COVID-19 Adaptation Grant Program. For their commitment and determination, I thank Jeanine from the Coffee Club Sandgate, Jim from newsXpress Sandgate, Toby from Anita East Medispa, Rhonda from Hello World Travel and Ti from Three Wise Monkeys at Bracken Ridge. Thank you for sharing your experiences with me. I am glad to hear that your businesses will benefit from the government's unite and recover plan.

In 80 days the people of Queensland will exercise their solemn right and responsibility to freely elect this assembly and, in turn, the next government of Queensland. It is time that we take the right choice—

(Time expired)