




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD

Record of Proceedings, 16 June 2020

MOTION

Coronavirus, Economic Response

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (3.13 pm): If there are any words that describe this Labor government in a time of a pandemic they are ‘dithering’, ‘dysfunction’ and ‘distraction’. That is the Labor way of dealing with a problem—dithering around, wondering what to do and waiting for a lead from the federal LNP government. When the Prime Minister called for a national cabinet, guess who was on the first flight to Canberra to be part of it and to be seen in the photo? It was the member for Inala, who could not wait to get down there to stand side by side with someone who actually knew what they needed to do.

The federal government immediately put money on the line—\$1,500—for every worker kept on by the private sector to save jobs, houses and businesses. The federal government expanded the JobSeeker program to ensure people could get through. What did we see from members of this government? They put \$30 million into a tourism advertising program for which they then shut down the borders so tourists could not get here anyway. What a complete misreading of the situation! What a complete lack of foresight!

We see in this motion the stories about funding for the arts. Who is the biggest employer of arts in the state of Queensland? It is the state of Queensland. Who were not getting paid? The workers at QPAC, the workers working in the arts sector, because this government said, ‘No, no, no, we will not take our responsibilities seriously. We want the federal government to bail out state employees working at QPAC.’ I have the emails for that.

What about the business grants the government silently cut and closed up on a Sunday? All of a sudden, all that applicants received was a note from the Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority website saying, ‘Sorry. Applications full.’ What they did not say is that they were actually full two weeks earlier and, ‘We kept hope alive unreasonably; keep sending your applications in.’ In fact, when the pressure was brought on by the LNP and the small business community, they expanded it by another \$100 million and now another \$100 million announced in a lousy way today—well after it was needed. This is a government, again, of distraction, dysfunction and dithering. The government does not know what to do and so does nothing, and Queensland businesses pay the price for it.

Members of the government are not telling us that, while they are putting the money into the business grants—belatedly, slowly, in dribs and drabs and well after it is needed by small business—they have cut all of the Advance Queensland grants and all of the innovate grants. Now people who had reached approval for stage 4 of those grants—anything from \$10,000 to \$200,000—are not getting the money. This is an unbelievable amount of mess and dithering. Then members of the government come into this place and have the hide to say they are doing the right thing. What a cheek!