




Speech By
Amanda Camm

MEMBER FOR WHITSUNDAY

Record of Proceedings, 1 September 2021

PUBLIC HEALTH AND OTHER LEGISLATION (FURTHER EXTENSION OF EXPIRING PROVISIONS) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Ms CAMM** (Whitsunday—LNP) (6.09 pm): I rise to contribute to this debate. As outlined by my colleague the member for Mudgeeraba, this is very important legislation. I am very disappointed with the government's approach of not allowing every member of the House the opportunity to speak in the debate on the extension of powers legislation as it is critical legislation. As outlined by the members before me, it impacts every single Queenslanders, both in our state and those who cannot get back into our state at the moment—whether they are in business, whether they have a family member who has passed away or whether they are looking to return at some stage in the future.

This does not take away from the importance of the health directives. This is not about questioning the actual health advice. It is about the transparency of that health advice. It is also about ensuring consistency when health advice is released and who is charged with communicating that health advice and the directives that are given. Members should have an opportunity to represent their community so that the government can hear what the impacts are when that health advice is given or flippantly expressed in a media conference or statement such as when the Premier stood up and told people in South-East Queensland not to travel to regional and rural Queensland and North Queensland. That has an impact. Where was the health advice?

I represent the Whitsundays and, when the member for Mackay is touting how great the tourism industry is doing in the Whitsundays, I will remind this House that Hayman Island is at six per cent occupancy, Hamilton Island is at 17 per cent and Airlie Beach is at 40 per cent occupancy. Charter boat companies have a list of staff where they have to decide who gets a shift this week based on whether their partner works.

Mr Healy interjected.

Ms CAMM: I take the interjection from the member for Cairns. Are your charter boat companies at the moment divvying up their two or three trips out to the reef based upon whether someone has to pay their rent?

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Bush): Pause the clock. Member for Whitsundays, I ask you to direct your comments through the chair.

Ms CAMM: I will take your advice, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Ms Grace: International borders are closed.

Ms CAMM: I take the interjection from the minister. International borders are closed, and we are grateful for that decision made by the federal government. We are grateful because we need to reach that 80 per cent vaccination rate. That is a very good point. What is not closed is the border between Caboolture and Cairns. When the Premier came out of hotel quarantine and made that flippant comment, people across our state were too scared to drive an hour north. They were too scared because of a snap lockdown announced with two hours notice—which is what this government does. That isolated Queenslanders from other parts of the state.

Then there are the double standards that exist. This current government is drunk on power. That is a very dangerous place to be. It is an abuse of power. It is why these powers are so important. It is why we have foreshadowed moving amendments to ensure that this House can come together again in December to debate whether there is a need for another extension of power. After the comments made by the Premier today in the House about children and vaccinations—I look forward to seeing the health advice—I have already been contacted by parents across this state who are asking the question: are we now co-parenting with the Premier of Queensland? When was the Premier qualified to give vaccination advice to parents across the state? This is simple scaremongering. It is an abuse of power and it needs to be called out for what it is.

The Labor government is so insecure that it needs to keep fear in the minds of people instead of promoting vaccination, instead of going out to Indigenous communities and knocking on door after door to ensure our most vulnerable population is vaccinated. When is that investment going to happen? When is that vaccination rollout going to occur? You can blame the federal government all you want—

Honourable members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Members on both sides, I ask that you stop quarrelling across the chamber.

Ms CAMM:—but it was the fearmongering by this Premier around AstraZeneca that delayed the vaccine rollout and people's take-up of the vaccine. Responsibility needs to be taken.

We will all accept the health advice when it is delivered transparently. Businesses will understand when you deliver the health advice with facts. The continuation of scaremongering and fear makes me question, and makes my community question, whether this health system with an 80 per cent vaccination rate could actually handle any outbreak.