



Speech By
Andrew Powell

MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

Record of Proceedings, 15 September 2021

MOTION

Queensland Border Restrictions

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (5.55 pm): I join with the member for Kawana and members on this side of the chamber and call on the Premier to bring the Queenslanders home. The Premier and those opposite will try and twist what we in the opposition are calling for in parliament tonight. They will claim we are calling for open slather on the borders, that the borders should be opened. That is simply untrue. They will claim we are calling for residents wanting to relocate from southern states to Queensland should be let in. Again, untrue.

Ms Grace interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Order! Member for McConnel.

Mr POWELL: They will claim their decision to slam shut our borders here in Queensland is the fault of the federal government. That is not only untrue; that is downright farcical. They will claim it is because we do not have enough vaccine. Once again, false. The Chief Health Officer is on the record herself saying there is plenty. Perhaps the Premier should not have scared everyone out of taking AstraZeneca. What we are calling for is to allow Queensland residents to come home. My office, like others, has been inundated since the moment the Premier, with two hours notice—

Mr Millar interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Sorry, member for Glass House, I am going to ask you to resume your seat. Member for Gregory, if you think there is another member in this chamber being disorderly and you would like to bring it to the attention of the Speaker or Deputy Speaker, you have the option of rising and taking a point of order. I am well aware of the member's interjections and I am dealing with that when I get a chance, without interrupting the speaker, but I have done that now. Member, you are warned.

Mr POWELL: My office, like others here, has been inundated since the moment the Premier, with two hours notice, slammed shut hotel quarantine to everyone, stranding countless Queenslanders across the border. Initially, some of them were happy to wait and make that sacrifice that the member for Morayfield called for, until they learnt the Premier had let in sporting entourages. Then the outrage at the double standards opened the floodgates. Let me share just a couple of the confronting stories from residents of the Glass House electorate.

One of my residents is worried sick about her daughter who was in a southern state for university until lockdowns forced her to defer her studies. The daughter had already shipped her things home and had handed in the keys to her apartment when the Premier slammed the border and hotel quarantine shut. The daughter is homeless, spiralling into depression, and her counsellors have presented evidence that being alone in hotel quarantine would be very harmful for her. My constituent, the mother,

lives on an isolated, remote property and details of that isolation, including aerial photographs, have been provided to the Chief Health Officer. She can easily do self-quarantine there, at low risk to the entire community. The mother again contacted me today, desperate, and has asked—

What is the evidence that Queensland Health is using to delay making a decision on this case? Who are the delegates delaying this decision and what is their experience and expertise in mental health? Do these delegates understand that their non decision, compounds mental health issues with feelings of helplessness?

Please, Premier, you need to do better. Then there is Joan and Allan, from Glasshouse Mountains, stuck in Central West New South Wales. Joan and Allan were travelling in New South Wales in their caravan and did not hear about the border closure until it was too late to reach it. They have chosen to sit it out in a caravan park because they cannot afford the hotel quarantine, nor the expense of shipping their caravan and vehicle home. They are both fully vaccinated and COVID negative and just want to come home. I quote—

“Let me get this straight we are fully vaccinated and negative, and have no right to go home to Queensland without hotel quarantine and flying in, but we can transfer our car and caravan to an unvaccinated driver who has the right to cross the border?”

Then there is Lily and John from Maleny, who travelled to Sydney back in June for their granddaughter’s birthday. The following day COVID cases were announced in Bondi, more than 40 kilometres from where they were staying in Glenwood. Yes, they miscalculated that the subsequent lockdown would be short and chose to stay and enjoy time with their family. However, both Lily and John have had two AstraZeneca shots and all of their family they are staying with have been vaccinated. There are apparently no COVID cases in the immediate neighbourhood in which they are confined. They have tried to get a pass to re-enter Queensland but were rejected because they fall into a hotspot. They are pensioners; they cannot afford hotel quarantine. They live in a smaller community within a community with neighbours who would happily shop for them and leave the shopping on their front verandah. At this stage their short visit to New South Wales back in June looks like it will extend indefinitely.

If it is good enough for sporting entourages, it is good enough for my young university student. If it is good enough for sporting entourages, it is good enough for Joan and Allan. If it is good enough for sporting entourages, it is good enough for Lily and John and everyone else that members on this side of the House have mentioned tonight. Bring the Queenslanders home.