



Speech By  
**Ann Leahy**


**MEMBER FOR WARREGO**

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Record of Proceedings, 15 September 2021

**MOTION**

**Queensland Border Restrictions**

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (5.24 pm): I rise to support the motion moved by the member for Kawana. In Queensland if you are in a sporting entourage the Queensland Labor government will wave you through hotel quarantine. If you are a WAG you will get the wave through. If you are a child like three-year-old Memphis Francis or a four-month-old baby like Rocka Blacker or 10-year-old Nate Russell or 12-year-old Lilly Camm, expect the first response to be a no—you are not coming home to Queensland under this government. If you are stranded and want to be reunited with your family expect a no. It is only after it hits the media that this government starts to take some notice.

Baby Rocka had to go to Sydney for treatment for his terminal illness. Specialists in Sydney made arrangements with doctors in Dalby so Rocka could go home to quarantine on the family farm. His parents, Jessie and Billy, were refused this option by the exemptions unit. The exemptions unit overruled Rocka's Sydney medical specialist's advice. It seems the health advice is okay for the government when it is aligned with the polling research, but it is not when it comes from the specialist of a seriously ill four-month-old baby.

**Mr Weir:** No compassion.

**Ms LEAHY:** No compassion. The exemptions unit wanted the family to split, with Jessie and Rocka quarantining in the Queensland Children's Hospital and Billy in a hotel. Jessie and Billy refused the split and they were bullied into quarantine in an Airbnb in Brisbane. They just want to go home. These parents are unhappy. They are distressed. They are isolated from their local family and their support networks.

This is a government that has no compassion for children or for residents who are left stranded. Like the member for Gregory said yesterday, thank God for the volunteers of Angel Flight who brought Memphis, Rocka, Nate, Lilly and several others to Queensland. Angel Flight volunteers have done more for these stranded children than the Queensland government. It is a disgrace. Despite the Premier saying that the exemptions unit must do better, the first response of the unit to these children has been a no.

This is a cold and heartless Labor government that opens the door for the sporting entourages only to knock back Queensland children and residents. Residents like Deb Hall from Adavale. Deb left Queensland in July for New South Wales with her two dogs to care for her 80-year-old dad who was injured when her mum was killed in a car accident. She is a caretaker for a 90,000-acre property at Adavale. The property owners had to employ additional staff so they do not end up with animal welfare issues due to Deb's extended absence. She applied to come home twice. Her passes have been rejected.

Then there is Erin from Brisbane who travelled 10 weeks ago to support her parents in Victoria. She applied five weeks ago for access to quarantine on compassionate grounds when her daughter fell ill. Due to the snap closure of quarantine, both her border pass and her compassionate passes were cancelled, forcing her to apply again on 5 September. She heard nothing until today about her application for quarantine—five weeks to get through the system.

**Mr Powell:** Five minutes if you enter New South Wales.

**Ms LEAHY:** And five minutes if you are in football. How many other Queenslanders have had their border and compassionate passes cancelled due to this snap closure of hotel quarantine by the Premier?

Then there is Geoff from Roma who has a broken pelvis from a farm accident in New South Wales. He is recuperating without family. He is injured and stranded. Then there are Emily and Ben from Bollon and their three children who are stranded in Broken Hill, desperate to get back to Bollon to care for their livestock. Then there is Rachel and Wally from Sarina who are stranded in New South Wales with their working horses on their New South Wales property and needing to get back to Sarina to their home property.

The Premier has acknowledged the need to do better. Doing better means bringing all Queenslanders home, including our children.