



Speech By  
**Brent Mickelberg**


**MEMBER FOR BUDERIM**

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Record of Proceedings, 27 May 2021

**PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT**

**Coronavirus, Small Business**

 **Mr MICKELBERG** (Buderim—LNP) (2.31 pm): Across Queensland, family owned bakeries, cafes and gyms that have had the misfortune to be listed as a COVID exposure site have been abandoned by the state government. On 6 May and again last week, I met with Maree Baker at her Gin Gin Bakery. Maree told me her story of a morning phone call from Queensland Health advising that a COVID-positive person had visited her business and that the public would be informed in 30 minutes. Maree explained that she felt afterwards there was no support or guidance from Queensland Health about the cleaning requirements or what to do next. In Maree's words, 'I felt abandoned by Queensland Health, left out to dry. They didn't care. They told us we had a case here and that was it.'

Maree explained to me the emotional anguish of having people abuse her and her staff, along with the misinformed online trolls who said things like, 'You are disgusting. You should be closed down,' simply because her business was open. Such individuals were ignorant of the Queensland Health rules and directions, which the Gin Gin Bakery had complied with, but their misinformed comments still weigh heavily on Maree. Unfortunately, it is an all-too-common story for businesses across the state that are listed as COVID exposure sites.

The comments of some ill-informed people are not the fault of the Minister for Small Business, but the state government can and must do more to help businesses inform their customers that they have complied with COVID rules and are safe to trade. The government could start by listening to the calls of the Small Business Commissioner and create a template that has a big green tick on it and a logo so that business owners can print it out and stick it on the front of their shops to help restore confidence.

Small businesses that are identified as COVID exposure sites should also be able to access specific grants to help them meet cleaning costs and increased staff costs and to make up for lost revenue. Despite having a much larger number of businesses identified as COVID exposure sites, the Victorian government provides grants of up to \$10,000 to help with costs when a small business is listed as a COVID exposure location.

The state government likes to crow about its support to small business, but the facts are that the state government has failed small businesses like the Gin Gin Bakery. It has failed to support small businesses in their time of need, and it is not good enough. These small businesses from across the state are receiving no financial support and inadequate information, with the burden of compliance falling only to the small business. The effect is an emotional and financial toll that is crushing family businesses that are just trying to put food on the table and provide a service to the community. I call on the state government to do more to support these small businesses in their time of need.