




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR KEPPEL

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MOTION

Queensland Border Restrictions

 **Ms LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (5.29 pm): I rise to speak in support of the amendment moved by the Deputy Premier and against the motion moved by the LNP opposition. The member for Warrego talked about all of those cases but what is interesting is that, if the Prime Minister had got quarantine right and if the Prime Minister had got the vaccine rollout right, perhaps these people would not be stranded. This motion, moved in this place today, is just another example that the LNP have absolutely no idea how to navigate through a crisis.

Ms Camm interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Order, member for Whitsunday!

Ms LAUGA: This is just another example in a long list of examples since the global pandemic came to our shores last year. Thank goodness those opposite are not in government because, frankly, we would all be doomed. Luckily we have the Premier and the Chief Health Officer who are standing up for Queenslanders against the attacks of the Morrison government and against the attacks of those opposite.

Queensland is going so well. Tourism in Central Queensland in my area is booming. Business is booming.

Ms Camm interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, member for Whitsunday! Pause the clock. Member for Whitsunday, I have brought my concerns to your attention on many occasions. I will warn you now formally.

Ms LAUGA: Rocky has never had an NRL game before, but in the last month we have had three! Only a few weeks ago at the Village Festival in Yeppoon we had bands playing and there was a mosh pit. None of this is happening in New South Wales and Victoria right now. If those opposite had their way, they would have opened the borders and let it rip. I do not need to paint that ugly picture.

Australians have been plunged into uncertainty and disruption because of a leaky quarantine system and a slow vaccine rollout. Scott Morrison says it is not a race. It is a race and it always was a race. The Prime Minister had two jobs: a speedy, effective rollout of the vaccine, and quarantine—and he has failed at both.

The LNP federal government and the LNP Queensland opposition are an absolute rabble. You have Senator Matt Canavan, Senator for Queensland, alleging that you cannot catch COVID outside, criticising the borders being closed and restrictions being in place to protect Queenslanders. However, the senator was very complimentary of the Central Queensland Health and Hospital Service medical staff last week on the fortnightly COVID zoom, thanking them for the good work they are doing throughout this global pandemic. That is not what he is saying in the media though.

Then you have George Christensen going off tap and not being reprimanded. The Deputy Prime Minister and also a former prime minister were caught not wearing a mask. These are dangerous places to be—dangerous areas. It is completely irresponsible for Matt Canavan and George Christensen to be using public office, a position of power and influence, to spread misinformation and lies.

We learnt last week that, despite the Prime Minister saying Australia would be at the front of the queue for vaccines, when Pfizer reached out to the Commonwealth health minister, instead of meeting with one of the world's leading COVID vaccine candidates, Minister Hunt sent some junior burgher to the meeting. It was two months later that the health minister finally met with Pfizer when countries like the US and UK had already signed deals and had supply flowing through. It took another four months before Pfizer started flowing into Australians' arms, but the Australian government has had to beg, borrow and steal to get supply from other countries.

We know that, if Scott Morrison had procured enough vaccines for his original vaccine rollout goal, over 80 per cent of the Australian population would be vaccinated today. Let me repeat: if he had procured enough vaccines from Pfizer, over 80 per cent of our country would be vaccinated today, and we could already have purpose-built quarantine facilities in Queensland established if it were not for the Prime Minister's inaction. Our Premier pleaded with him: we need regional quarantine facilities because our hotels are not built for quarantine.

You would think that the opposition would have learnt that playing politics with borders does not work. Playing politics with a global pandemic is irresponsible, it is disrespectful to the expert doctors and medical practitioners and it is just plain stupid. Last week we heard the LNP call for the borders to be reopened—how many times, members?

Government members: Sixty-four!

Ms LAUGA: Sixty-four times. One Nation was doing the same. Disgracefully, Pauline Hanson said all the sick and elderly should lock themselves away so the borders could reopen. She started a GoFundMe page to raise funds for a High Court challenge—which I understand had a goal of about a million dollars but did not even reach the \$50,000 mark. Where is that money now?

Our health is at risk. Our economy is held hostage. Families are being kept apart. Australians deserve better and Queenslanders deserve a better opposition.

(Time expired)