




Speech By
Patrick Weir

MEMBER FOR CONDAMINE

Record of Proceedings, 14 September 2021

ADJOURNMENT

Queensland Border Restrictions

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (9.38 pm): The closure of the border between Queensland and New South Wales has thrown many people's lives into complete disarray. For some this is interfering with the operation of their small businesses, the schooling of their children, getting to their place of employment, transporting commodities interstate and back again or attending special occasions or, sadly, funerals. I support the need to have checks and balances on our border, with the delta variant spreading rapidly in New South Wales and Victoria; however, rural and regional areas, especially those with no reported COVID cases, should have some common sense applied and exemptions granted in certain circumstances.

Recently a constituent of Condamine travelled to New South Wales to locate her son who had been uncontactable for several weeks. Upon travelling over the border prior to the closure, she discovered that her son had been murdered. This lady had all the required passes at the time of crossing the border and was not expecting to find her son dead. Hence her husband crossed the border to offer support and was one of the 10 people at the funeral and cremation on 18 August.

After the funeral service, her husband returned to Queensland on 21 August with the appropriate pass and was told to isolate at home. Two days later, on 23 August, this Aboriginal lady, in a state of extreme distress after the tragic loss of her son, attempted to enter Queensland unaware of any border changes and was fined. Subsequently, she then spent almost 18 days in a Boggabilla motel, testing negative on at least five occasions. During this time she tried to self-harm and was delivered literally by the Boggabilla police to an ambulance waiting at the border and placed in the Goondiwindi Hospital. Once discharged, she was transferred back to Boggabilla. The Condamine office sent almost 40 emails with countless phone calls requesting urgent assistance, most of these to the health department. This was to no avail, although it made some suggestions like, 'Drive to Moree, leave your vehicle there, fly to Sydney, wait 14 hours in the middle of a hot spot, then fly to Brisbane and quarantine.'

An opposition member: Great solution!

Mr WEIR: Brilliant! It also suggested that she drive to Coolangatta and quarantine at a hotel. All of these were unacceptable and unaffordable to an Aboriginal lady who does not fly, had not driven in a city for 30 years, has a deep bond to the country and was in no fit mental condition to do any of the above. Finally, after requesting emergency assistance from the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships on 8 September, she arrived safely home on 10 September to quarantine for 14 days. It should not be that hard.