




Speech By
Patrick Weir

MEMBER FOR CONDAMINE

Record of Proceedings, 13 May 2021

PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Coronavirus, Quarantine Facilities

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (2.56 pm): In January 2021, we first heard of a proposed quarantine facility to be located at Wellcamp and constructed by the Wagner group. It has been used as a political football by the Palaszczuk government ever since. On 27 January 2021 I wrote to the Premier as the local member requesting information from the state government about the quarantine hub. Similarly, my state colleagues the members for Toowoomba North and Toowoomba South and the federal member for Groom also wrote asking for the state government's health plan for this proposed facility to house Australian citizens returning from overseas. It is now almost the middle of May and still the Palaszczuk government is unable to produce a health plan which, you would hope, the whole proposal hinges upon. After all, the Premier repeatedly says that she is keeping us safe. Therefore, any proposal should be putting Queenslanders' health first and foremost, before anything else.

No health plan has been sighted by the state members in the Toowoomba vicinity, no health plan has been sighted by the Prime Minister and, very importantly, no health plan has been sighted by the people who live and work in the Darling Downs area. The Premier constantly says that she has taken the Chief Health Officer's advice on all things COVID. Where is our copy of the health plan for this quarantine facility? We would like to think that our safety matters just as much as the safety of those in Brisbane. What does the government have to hide? The single biggest concern of those in the region is how the government will keep them safe. If the plan does exist, why has it not been released?

We all are aware that a significant number of returning overseas travellers are testing positive to COVID-19 whilst in hotel quarantine. Does the health plan include an extra stand of ambulances to transport these positive cases from Wellcamp to Brisbane hospitals? More importantly, are there enough ambulances and staff to do this task? It is almost two hours from Wellcamp to the Mater Hospital.

In all honesty, I think the Palaszczuk government is now pulling wool over the eyes of both the Wagner group and the Toowoomba community and has no intention of producing a health plan. The whole debate is serving another purpose; that is, to try to shift blame onto the Prime Minister and brand him as a COVID villain. Both the Queensland and Western Australian elections were COVID elections. This is now serving a political purpose—an attempt to win federal seats in Queensland at the upcoming federal election. There is nothing else that makes sense. There must be a plan. If the Premier is serious about this facility, there must be a plan. It must be released. Otherwise, this is simply a hoax. The people of Toowoomba deserve better.