



Speech By  
**Ros Bates**


**MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA**

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Record of Proceedings, 15 September 2021

**MOTION**

**Queensland Border Restrictions**

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (5.14 pm): I rise to support the motion before the House moved by the member for Kawana. I am a nurse. I, like most Queenslanders, must accept the health advice, even though we do not get to see the health advice. I know there are good reasons to limit movement when required to stop the spread of this deadly COVID virus, but I cannot believe the chaos created by this government with the snap lockdown of the border just south of the great electorate of Mudgeeraba. Hundreds of people have been caught out, lives disrupted and businesses destroyed by the heartless actions of this government. The government has had long enough to sort this out, but they are paralysed with inaction and Queenslanders are paying the price.

I would like to share with the House some of the stories I have heard from desperate Queenslanders trying to get home, trying to get to work and school, and trying to care for their families, all frustrated by the nonsensical and bizarre rulings that let a plane load of sporting entourage and their families in, while keeping children from reuniting with their families and stopping Queensland workers from putting food on the tables of their families.

Laila shares custody of her adult disabled son who is non-verbal and occasionally physical. The arrangements mean that both parents get respite from the demands of caring for him. She has been trying to get an exemption to quarantine at home when he returns from interstate where he has been staying with his father. She knows that the familiar surroundings and spending time with his mother play a huge role in keeping him calm and well. But the exemption unit said no. He is essentially stuck in New South Wales with his father who is rapidly heading for burnout.

It is the same for Sandra's son. He has been locked down at his university in Armidale and his mental health is declining. She wants him home and again knows that the delay in obtaining a room in a hotel and then the 14-day isolation would be devastating for him. This is another case where a remote rural property would be perfect for home quarantine and another young Queenslanders would be safe at home with his family.

There is the case of young Levi who fled a domestic violence situation in Victoria and, on the advice of Victorian authorities, drove straight through the night to the Queensland border at Goondiwindi. His mother says he was devastated to be turned around by police there and told to go back to Sydney, the epicentre of COVID, and then to fly to Brisbane. He had no money and he did not think he would be able to manage in hotel quarantine even if he had been able to get a room. She rang my office in tears, bewildered by the plane load of NRL players allowed to cross the border to quarantine with their children and parents as families.

Then there is the family from the Western Downs. A mother drove to Narrabri to claim her son's remains after police feared he had taken his own life. She drove to the border with her son's ashes beside her in the car. She was turned around and has been put by community members in a hotel for

two weeks. She suffered a breakdown and was admitted to hospital in Queensland and cared for by our terrific frontline staff. When she was discharged, she was sent straight back over the border, unable still to get home with her son's ashes to grieve properly with her family.

Then there is Dayna, a teacher supporting children with special needs who flew to country Victoria for her sister's funeral prior to the state's current lockdown. She wants to come home, but, as a teacher, she is not deemed to be an essential worker. Her students might beg to differ. Why can she not come home and quarantine with her family?

Lesley, a specialist nurse practitioner who is supposed to be working in a remote Indigenous community, cannot get back into Queensland to help some of our most vulnerable community members.

Jamie, a local high school student from my electorate who lives in New South Wales, has missed the lead-up to final exams because the borders slammed shut with just two hours notice. No amount of pleading with exemption teams have worked. He could not get over the border and has missed weeks of essential learning, not to mention time to be spent with schoolmates and teammates.

We have had tradies who had gone interstate to work, stranded when jobs finished with no way to get back, no money and nowhere to quarantine. Young people are living in cars, camping with friends on the arbitrary line that separates our state from New South Wales. They have been waiting for transparency, decency and consistency from this government. The sad reality is that these Queenslanders will be waiting a long time. Thousands of Queenslanders have essentially been left stateless. The Premier has acknowledged the need to do better. Doing better means bringing Queenslanders home.