




Speech By
Sandy Bolton

MEMBER FOR NOOSA

Record of Proceedings, 17 November 2021

ADJOURNMENT

Noosa Electorate

 **Ms BOLTON** (Noosa—Ind) (7.18 pm): As we joyfully celebrate masks coming off, Queenslanders coming home and borders reopening, there is also enormous grief. Our inboxes overflow with pleas from residents, regardless of vaccination status, opposing what they see as the introduction of a two-tier society through new directives. Segregation, isolation and discrimination against Queenslanders is wrong morally and ethically.

For Noosa, this now includes potential decimation—from hospitality businesses that may need to close as a result of vaccination mandates, workers left without jobs and patients stranded. Yes, these latest announcements will see increasing waitlists with losses of doctors, chiropractors, midwives, psychologists, dentists and other health professionals because of their vaccination status. So far over 200 from my electorate have contacted me. Then we have disability carers like Jess, who is disabled herself. With multiple health issues, she now faces unemployment after being refused a vaccination exemption. Jess and those she cares for are distraught, and we have not even been told how long this nightmare will go on for. What is being handed down without consultation or debate is endangering people's lives and livelihoods. This is not a reward for the vaccinated. As they have said, what is being perpetrated on their unvaccinated loved ones and their community is unnecessary and divisive.

I stand here and make three pleas. Firstly, please extend options to small businesses and workers through daily PCR or rapid antigen testing and PPE, which is already being utilised by unvaccinated exempt Queenslanders and across the world. Secondly, provide a guarantee to our businesses that any costs in defending court action because of any mandates will be covered by government or allow them to utilise the distancing and capacity restrictions as they have previously. Let us remember that small town cafes, pubs and restaurants nor libraries are heaving nightclubs or stadiums. They are intimately connected with their community—often the only hub for our most vulnerable—and should be given options. Lastly, I ask that those who have severe medical conditions which should preclude them from having a vaccination be given access to exemptions, and we are being written to that that is not happening. Unity and clarity is needed, not divisions.

For those making these decisions who have the security of a salary regardless of mandates, just like all of us here as MPs, I beg you to reconsider and reassess. We were told from the very start of this pandemic that we were in this together. Actions speak louder than words, and there is nothing 'together' in mandates that separate or segregate us. As I said last sitting, this is not who we are or what we aspire to.