




Speech By
Ann Leahy

MEMBER FOR WARREGO

Record of Proceedings, 24 February 2022

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENT

Agricultural Show Societies, Health Directives

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (2.31 pm): I rise to advise the House of the inconsistencies, anomalies confusion and impost on volunteers, the additional costs on our not-for-profit show societies and the impact this is having on regional economic community recovery. In December last year for the first time showgrounds were included in the health directive. Showgrounds were never included in health directives prior to this date. In the absence of publicly available health advice, the only reason for including shows in this manner is for political purposes. Of the 50 electorates that have shows, only six of these seats are held by government members. This directive has been a direct impost on the non-government members' communities.

Shows have a direct annual economic contribution of \$141 million to local regional communities. The current onerous burden is costing these communities their path to COVID economic recovery. Of the 20 shows in the first quarter of the season, three have been cancelled and eight have been postponed—all because of how unworkable the health directive is for these volunteer show societies.

All the shows are asking for is to be treated equally like other events, which are able to continue in the same communities on the same facilities at showgrounds, yet shows are singled out in the directive. It is absurd that for one to two days during the show the directive places restrictions on who can enter; however, for other community events on the other 363 days this does not apply. Shows just want to be treated like other community recreation centres and outdoor events. The Dalby pony club has their state titles on the sport and rec land beside the showgrounds with no restriction, but the same people who compete in horse events cannot compete at the forthcoming Dalby show. Showgrounds have been singled out for special treatment by the Labor government without explanation as to why. If there is health advice, then provide it to the societies and assist them to implement it.

I have written to the Chief Health Officer and the Minister for Health. The shadow minister for health has written to the Chief Health Officer about this matter. The Queensland Chamber of Agricultural Societies has written directly to Queensland Health and made a submission to the Chief Health Officer. To date no-one has received a response. When the Labor government gives up on integrity they give up on governing. This government is so distracted by their own integrity crisis they have given up on helping 15,000 volunteers in our show societies who are caught up in this bureaucratic mess.