




Speech By  
**Linus Power**

**MEMBER FOR LOGAN**

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Record of Proceedings, 26 October 2022

**PUBLIC HEALTH AND OTHER LEGISLATION (COVID-19 MANAGEMENT)  
AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (11.28 am): It is so disappointing in these tough times that there are those who seek to play politics and say that this government does not support our hardworking nurses and doctors. It is a disgrace because nurses in our state know that we back them with nurse-to-patient ratios, support, increased wages—the industrial relations minister is here—and good, safe wages and conditions. To suggest otherwise is taking the pressure of this pandemic and attempting to play politics with it in a way that is truly disappointing.

I now turn to the bill. I have three simple reasons members should support this bill. Firstly, we have come so far through this pandemic by sticking together, having a plan that we had from day one and delivering it. Queenslanders have done the hard work: they got vaccinated, wore masks when asked and stayed home when asked. They only went out to get necessities and they kept other Queenslanders safe. But it is not good enough to stay the course if the course is not the right way. What we have done so far has kept Queenslanders safe. Before we opened our borders seven Queenslanders had died—that is still seven families to whom it mattered a great deal—only one of whom got the disease within Queensland borders. We know that we can keep Queenslanders safe, so that is why it is important to keep this going.

Just as importantly, we have kept our economy strong. No economy in the world is going to be strong when people—your family members—are dying. I was speaking to a member who had family and friends working in nursing overseas—they were in the United States in southern New Jersey—and when they asked others around them, not one in their circle had not had a family member die. These are the stakes we are talking about. We have kept our economy strong, we have done the hard yards and we want to keep faith with that. I am extraordinarily proud of Queenslanders, and you have probably seen that in my three reasons. I am proud of our doctors. I am proud of the work they did to follow the directions of our Chief Health Officer. I am proud of our nurses who, prior to vaccinations, turned up every day knowing that any patient who was coughing had a dangerous infectious disease. I am proud of them, and to suggest that we do not support them frustrates me.

I also want to speak about Logan. I am extraordinarily proud of Logan. After we put out the directions we went down to Grand Plaza and we could see the transformation. People were wearing masks and separating from others. They were doing what was right. I am proud of communities like the Parklands Christian College. When one of their cleaners had a case come in from Victoria, the whole community transformed. They went to the Parklands gym and got tested multiple times, and they did that because they wanted to keep the Logan community safe. Following the directions of the Chief Health Officer was what kept the Logan community safe.

I want to point out that some members have misled the House. They seemed to suggest there has been this unique set of laws in Queensland to only deal with the COVID pandemic. In reality, we have dealt with infectious diseases and issued orders to keep people in quarantine right from the beginning of Queensland. When people sailed past Stradbroke Island through the heads they had to

pass Dunwich. They were commanded to put up a flag to signal whether they had an infectious disease on board, whereupon they were directed to quarantine at Dunwich, later the Dunwich asylum. Right from the beginning of our history we have had these orders in place. As we should all know by now, this was exactly the same in 1917 when a highly infectious new strain of influenza was killing people around the world. We had these orders in place then. This is a part of our Queensland tradition. As I said, we have done the hard yards. It is part of our tradition. We should continue to stick with it. It is embarrassing that, right at this juncture when we have had success in this state, there are those who want to throw away the principles that have served us not just through the pandemic but right from the beginning of Queensland's history.

I want to talk about the role of the Chief Health Officer. I am firmly of the belief—and I have been strengthened in that belief by looking at what we have gone through with the COVID pandemic—that the role of the Chief Health Officer, which is to make scientific decisions about how we keep Queenslanders safe in the face of rampant infectious disease, is vital. We saw that this process can easily become politicised when there are tough and emotional decisions to be made. We saw this when the member for Broadwater—then not the opposition leader, so perhaps freer to say silly things—attacked Dr Young and said that her decisions had absolutely no connection to reality.

**Ms Pease** interjected.

**Mr POWER:** This is the point I am going to. In an interview with Alan Jones, where he felt free to be himself, the member for Broadwater said of Dr Young, 'This is punch-drunk bureaucrats who are power hungry and it needs to be called out.' It is disappointing when you attack a person who has done so much to keep Queenslanders safe and our economy strong, but that is the kind of character the LNP chose to lead their party. We know that the LNP called for the borders to be opened 64 times. Time and time again they called for the borders to be opened.

**Dr Robinson:** And you opened them.

**Mr POWER:** That is right. I heard the member for Oodgeroo say that the borders were eventually opened. We knew they would be, but if we had opened them when the LNP wanted to—

**Dr Robinson** interjected.

**Mr POWER:** This is how they try and rewrite history. How do we know they would not have opened them at the same time? We know what Gladys Berejiklian said before the election when she was on *Sunrise*. Speaking of this situation she said—

Oh look, Deb and I have a great working relationship.

I want to identify that the person she was talking about was the former Leader of the Opposition. She continued—

We are in touch with each other all the time, in fact I was in touch with her yesterday and she—

in this case the former deputy leader of the opposition—

feels very strongly about keeping jobs in her state and getting tourism back up and running, so I know if she was elected Premier she would definitely open the border—

Hold on! She goes on to say—

and she would have done it months ago because that's the way Deb and the LNP are up there.

We know because Gladys Berejiklian belled the cat, revealed the danger the LNP is and showed they would have opened it months ago, exposing us. We also need to know about this—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Krause): Member for Logan, do not use props, please.

**Mr POWER:** Apologies. We also need to know that Michael Hart, the member for Burleigh, put up a billboard calling for the borders to be opened. He called for Victorians to fly in in winter to infect the elderly of Queensland. I want to make it clear for the member—

**Ms Pease** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Lytton, cease your quarrelling.

**Mr POWER:**—that in June 2021 these calls were made and it would have infected—

*(Time expired)*