




Speech By
Nikki Boyd

MEMBER FOR PINE RIVERS

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

 **Ms BOYD** (Pine Rivers—ALP) (12.00 pm): If ever honourable members needed an example of the stark contrast between the LNP and the Labor Party, I think the member for Currumbin just demonstrated it where the choice and the decision of the individual were at odds with the safety and security of the many. While border closures were tough decisions, they were made with the consideration of the safety of all Queenslanders at their centre.

I rise today to support the Public Health and Other Legislation (COVID-19 Management) Amendment Bill 2022. This legislation continues the fantastic work that the Palaszczuk Labor government has been doing throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. In fact, the Palaszczuk government is renowned for being one of the world leaders in terms of managing the virus, suppressing the virus and then moving to get our population vaccinated and safe prior to the general entry of the virus. We have achieved that because we implemented the expert health advice in a really measured and responsible way.

I commend the Premier, Minister Miles, Minister D'Ath and our chief health officers, Dr Gerrard and Her Excellency Dr Jeannette Young, for the work they have done in this space over the last two years. While they have made difficult decisions, time has shown that they have been the correct decisions and they have been the decisions that have kept Queenslanders safe.

I would like to start my contribution by reflecting upon the words of the opposition in their dissenting report. It states—

It would be remiss if we did not acknowledge that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused significant disruption and upheaval to the lives of Queenslanders. There can be no escaping from the fact that COVID-19 took away many things from many people. We have previously expressed that sentiment when examining similar legislation ...

Let's reflect upon the comments of the LNP, repeated almost verbatim by the member for Mudgeeraba in the context of the LNP's record during this pandemic, a record that continued to disregard and undermine expert health advice throughout the duration of the pandemic.

Mr Watts: Hard to know. None of it is published.

Ms BOYD: I see the member for Toowoomba North interjecting, and what a delight this is. This is the former shadow minister who had a street party and lied about being on his driveway when he was in fact on the road. He absolutely disgraced himself during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was a disgrace.

Mr Watts interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Member for Toowoomba North, you are on a warning.

Mr WATTS: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take personal offence at the word 'disgrace'. I made a mistake and I apologised to this House and the people of Queensland. I ask for it to be withdrawn.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Taking a point of order is not an opportunity to debate a matter or provide further explanation, but I will grant that. The member has taken personal offence and I ask that you withdraw.

Ms BOYD: I withdraw. Let's reflect upon these comments of the LNP and their record of disregarding and undermining the expert health advice throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. It is nice to hear that some of that disregard and some of that undermining is, in fact, a mistake. That is probably the first time that we have heard that from an LNP member in this chamber during this debate. Certainly no other LNP members have admitted that disregarding and undermining the expert health advice was a mistake or an error. We had the former leader of the opposition, after a crushing electoral defeat in November 2020, go on the public record. The member for Nanango is quoted as saying—

"The LNP was in a very strong prospect of winning this election.

"There is no doubt that COVID has had a huge impact on Queensland politics, just as COVID has had an impact on politics and other elections in both Australia and New Zealand.

"I am proud of the policies and the candidates that we put forward at this election."

I can tell honourable members what may have actually played a part in this. It may have been that her own party referred her to the CCC during an election campaign. It may have been—

Ms SIMPSON: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member is—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order. I have not called you yet, member. Member for Maroochydore, what is your point of order?

Ms SIMPSON: The member is not relevant to the bill and I ask for her to remain relevant to the bill.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will seek some advice from the Assistant Clerk at the table.

Ms BOYD: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. So—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Resume your seat please, member. Member, I would ask you to come back to the long title of the bill. If you are explaining a point, please bring it back to the bill.

Ms BOYD: Thank you for your guidance, Mr Deputy Speaker. In terms of the LNP's record in the pandemic as it relates to their dissenting report, the member for Mudgeeraba came into this place only yesterday and said, 'We can't go on living indefinitely with these measures in place.' With respect, the member for Mudgeeraba's favourite pastime is politicising the health care of Queenslanders. The best people to provide that advice is not any of us who are elected to this place. It is actually epidemiologists and the Chief Health Officer; it is the very health experts that we rely on who are best placed to provide health advice on this pandemic, both since 2020 and well into the future.

The member for Southport said only yesterday that rather than bureaucrats making these decisions, the voting public wants elected representatives to do that. I can highlight that there was significant comfort provided to the public through having these decisions and actions informed by health professionals rather than politicians. That was a result we saw in 2020 at the ballot box. During the pandemic we saw the LNP call for the opening of borders an unsafe 64 times.

Mr Watts: And the borders were opened after those comments.

Ms BOYD: I take the interjection from the member for Toowoomba North. The borders were not opened during that time and the borders were not opened just after that time. They certainly were not opened after the member for Burleigh put up a billboard.

The borders were opened according to the roadmap when the majority of Queenslanders were actually vaccinated and it was safe to reopen the borders. Do honourable members know why it happened that way? We had a roadmap that was informed by expert health advice. It was informed through the Chief Health Officer. It was not because a politician in this place said, 'Open up the borders.' That is not the way we have operated during this pandemic and it will not be the way we operate in this pandemic into the future.

That is why these provisions are so important. I tell you what: I would not have wanted the member for Mirani advising anyone on what we should have done throughout this pandemic. That would have resulted in carnage. We see time and time again the LNP—and they still cannot help themselves right up to this very moment—come in with comments around this pandemic and the work that our hardworking health professionals have done.

I refer to an article titled 'Power hungry: LNP slams Queensland's top doctor's coronavirus advice'. Thank you, Lydia Lynch, for this article published on 24 April 2020 where Tim Mander, the member for Everton, is bagging out public servants. He is not to be outdone by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr MANDER: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. That is a misleading statement. I will be writing to the Speaker about that. I take personal offence at that issue and ask for it to be withdrawn.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): In relation to misleading the House, that is not a point of order. You can follow the due process. The member has taken personal offence and asks that you withdraw. I ask you to withdraw.

Ms BOYD: I withdraw. Directly quoting from the article—

Mr Mander said his criticism was of the government, not the Chief Health Officer.

Who is making these decisions? No wonder the LNP want people in this place to make decisions—it is where their criticism is very much levelled. He was outdone by the member for Broadwater, the Leader of the Opposition, who said that Dr Young's decision had 'absolutely no connection with reality'. An article states—

"This is punch-drunk bureaucrats who are power hungry and it needs to be called out," he told radio broadcaster Alan Jones.

This is the record of those opposite; this is the reason that they do not like to hear it. If this was my record, I would not want to hear it either. After what has been proven to be a world-leading response from the Palaszczuk government, it is astounding that we still continue to see criticism from those opposite. Quite frankly, they should be saying thank you.

Let us get some perspective on the privilege that those opposite hold. If they want to talk about a human toll, let us have a look at how this pandemic ripped through other countries. Let us have look at what happens when you open up borders in situations where people are not vaccinated against a deadly mutating virus. We have seen that right across the world—not just in one or two or three waves. In some countries, there have been even more. I do not want to see refrigerated trucks driving around on our roads picking up dead bodies—that was the reality in many countries right across the world. I do not want to see mass graves. If we had followed the advice of those opposite, then that would be the situation. Those members opposite are quick to criticise, but they take no responsibility.

(Time expired)