



Speech By
James Lister

MEMBER FOR SOUTHERN DOWNS

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QUEENSLAND FOOD FARMERS' COMMISSIONER BILL; CROSS-BORDER COMMISSIONER BILL; NIGHT-LIFE ECONOMY COMMISSIONER BILL



Mr LISTER (Southern Downs—LNP) (7.38 pm): I rise to associate myself with the remarks of the member for Currumbin and shadow minister for youth justice. This is something that she and I have been working towards for a long time, as have the members for Warrego and Scenic Rim. In fact, I was proud to stand with the leader of the party at the 2017 election and announce a cross-border commissioner, and I was very proud to associate myself with the 2020 election campaign of which the member for Currumbin was speaking where the LNP again committed to a cross-border commissioner, because its members have the border electorates. People like the members for Currumbin and Warrego and me understand what it means for our communities to be burdened with the difficulties of living on a border, where changes in jurisdiction can impede business, the business of local government and the provision of services.

I want to be very clear that the Cross-Border Commissioner will have, as part of his remit, work to improve law enforcement across both sides of the border. I note that this week, in answering two questions without notice from me about youth crime and so forth, the Premier answered specifically in terms of what the Cross-Border Commissioner will do. I make it clear that whilst the commissioner will have a role it will not be the panacea that we need right now. I do not think the Cross-Border Commissioner will have the power to change the law to enable youth offenders to be locked up so that they cannot continue to commit crime.

Mr Russo: I hope not because that's our job.

Mr LISTER: I take the interjection from my good friend the member for Toohey. He is right: it is our job. It is the job of this parliament. Guess who is in control of this parliament? It is the Labor government. I congratulate Mr Leavers on his appointment. I had the chance to speak with him briefly today. I have every confidence that he will show verve and commitment in his role.

I want to make an observation about the importance of the bipartisanship of the role. I am a member of parliament whose community faced very significant difficulties associated with border closures during COVID. There was a systematic locking out of non-Labor Party members of parliament from any decisions and any consultation around closures of the border. There were many times when the border was closed and it was easily foreseen that that measure would likely be required again, but we were never consulted. As a result, poor decisions that in no way improved the resistance of our state to COVID needlessly disadvantaged the small businesses, the big businesses, the workers, the farms, the families, the pensioners—everyone who lives in our border electorates.

Therefore, it is my expectation—and I would be very surprised if I was not supported in saying this by my colleagues whose electorates also border New South Wales—that the government should not in any way indicate to the Cross-Border Commissioner that he is their man because his position

works for all of us. I look forward to speaking again with the newly appointed commissioner to reinforce that view. Many officers close to the government, including very senior police officers, have said, 'I can't talk to you. I work for the government.' They do not work for the government; they work for the law.

The Cross-Border Commissioner does not work for the government; he works for the people of Queensland. I expect and I am quite certain that the newly appointed Cross-Border Commissioner will afford due courtesy and consultation to democratically elected members who represent cross-border areas. I am sorry that I have to say that but my experience was that there was a systematic and completely overwhelming drive by the government to lock out opposition members of parliament from decisions being made concerning the border. I hope that having a cross-border commissioner will mean that that does not happen in the future.