

CORONAVIRUS — INTERSTATE BORDER RESTRICTIONS

**658. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Premier:**

Before I ask my first question, I would like to offer my condolences to family, friends and colleagues of Russell Woolf, who sadly passed away overnight. “Rusty” would have been well known to many of us in this chamber. He was a kind, generous and larger-than-life individual. He was a fantastic broadcaster and fixture in our lives for many years. I, like many others, will miss his irreverence, his music and his zest for life. He was a very special bloke and he will be missed by many.

Members: Hear, hear!

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** I refer to the release today of South Australia’s plan out of COVID-19, in addition to the plans that have been released by the New South Wales, Victorian, Queensland and Tasmanian governments. As the only state now without a plan for its post-COVID future, when can Western Australians expect to see the government’s plan?

**Mr M. McGOWAN replied:**

Can I, firstly, indicate that our thoughts and regards go to the family of Russell Woolf. His death overnight was a shock to all of us. He was well known across Western Australia and loved by many people. He was a great raconteur; a very funny person. Also, he was very, very knowledgeable, especially about Western Australia, the resources industry and business. He wrapped that in a great sense of humour and a great sense of fun and positivity, which I think is what is needed on radio. He was just a great fellow. But, most importantly, he was a husband and father, and I know that his family will be hurting; we all feel for them. I am sure all members of Parliament and all Western Australians pass on their regards to the family of Russell Woolf.

Members: Hear, hear!

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** I have just a couple of points to make. Firstly, South Australia, as part of its plan, is maintaining social restrictions—they will be in place over the Christmas period and Christmas holidays. What that means is that a whole range of restaurants, functions, events, cafes, family events and Christmas events will have restrictions on the number of people who can attend and whether people can stand up at the events, and that people will have to wear masks at a whole range of these events. That will impact on families and their celebration of Christmas and also impact on businesses over the Christmas period.

We have consulted the small business community extensively on these matters. What we find in the tourism and hospitality sector is that a whole range of them rely upon the Christmas period and Christmas holidays for a large part of their income throughout the year—for some of them, up to 40 per cent of their income is generated over that period. Putting in place restrictions and the possibility of lockdowns, if cases come in, over the Christmas period is not something that we want to do. I understand Tasmania, Queensland and South Australia rely very heavily upon the tourism trade out of Sydney and Melbourne; therefore, we can understand why, in their situation, they are doing what they are doing. But in the Western Australian context, the idea that we damage our tourism industry and damage our hospitality industry and, basically, spoil Christmas for families across the state, is not something that we want to do at that point in time whilst we are getting our vaccination levels up. As I have said, when we get between 80 and 90 per cent vaccination rates, we will be able to detail exactly when we will open to New South Wales and Victoria. We are climbing in our vaccination rate each and every day. The main thing we should all be doing—all members of Parliament should be doing—is encouraging people to get vaccinated. That is the biggest contribution that can be made. We should not have members of mainstream political parties trying to stop people getting vaccinated, as we are seeing in Western Australia today. I urge the Liberal and National Parties to get their members on board to make sure they help to get Western Australians vaccinated, because to do otherwise is dangerous to the health of Western Australians.