




Speech By
Mark Boothman

MEMBER FOR THEODORE

Record of Proceedings, 11 March 2021

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Theodore—LNP) (12.31 pm): I rise to give my address-in-reply to His Excellency the Governor. I first thank the residents of the Theodore electorate, who put their trust in me for the fourth time. It is my great honour and privilege to represent them. I have done my utmost over the years to make myself available to all of my constituents—the wonderful, hardworking individuals and families who try to make something of their lives. They live in the best place in Queensland: the Gold Coast. Our community is very diverse. Some parts of my electorate are very wealthy; we have lovely canal blocks in certain sections. We have beautiful rolling hills out towards Tamborine Mountain. We also have areas where there is quite a bit of social housing. It is, as I said, a very diverse area.

It is a very humbling experience to be elected again to represent these individuals. As I said, over the years I have done my utmost to represent them and their views—no matter the political divide, no matter their thoughts when it comes to politics. Some of my best supporters are former Labor voters who have openly come out to help me because I believe that in the electorate I should not be playing politics. Their personal opinions and their lives must come first. That is something that I have always held to and I will always hold to.

In my electorate of Theodore, formerly the electorate of Albert, a lot of the problems we have faced over the years remain. In 2014 crime was not a particularly big issue, but these days crime, especially youth crime, is a major issue on the northern Gold Coast. Obviously there is a bill before the House in this regard. I will not go into any detail of my thoughts on that bill, but drastic measures need to be put in place to make a real difference, not only for families who are victims of crime but also to deal with the perpetrators.

The Theodore electorate is part of one of the fastest growing regions in Queensland. My colleague Michael Crandon holds the seat of Coomera just to the north of me. That electorate has had massive population growth over the years. I believe it has 25 per cent to 27 per cent overpopulation at present. The Theodore electorate has taken some of that population. One of the biggest issues in our electorate is the lack of infrastructure, especially when it comes to highway interchanges. Recently the government upgraded exit 57.

Mr Minnikin: How did that go?

Mr BOOTHMAN: The issue with exit 57 has not been solved. Regularly there are car accidents there because motorists get confused with the multitude of lanes. We regularly experience congestion, which this so-called upgrade was supposed to sort out. Unfortunately, many residents feel that the situation is worse than before.

The removal of right-hand turns—they allowed motorists to go across the motorway from Oxenford—has caused safety issues for other areas. For instance, the Dan Murphy's car park at The Ox Tavern is now used as a U-turn facility by a lot of motorists. Motorists are speeding through that car

park to come back around so they can go across the motorway. Media crews from Channel 7 and Channel 9 are astounded by what they see there. I must say, the interchange upgrade that the government spruiked during the election campaign was one of the saving graces for my campaign.

Residents are at their wits' end with it. When they saw the original designs all those years ago, they were very vocal against it because they felt it was a bandaid solution. They wanted a long-term solution that would fix the problem once and for all. I implore the Minister for Main Roads to work with the federal government to find a long-term solution that will alleviate the traffic at this intersection.

This intersection is confusing for motorists, especially motorists who do not live in the area. Motorists are unsure as to which of the multitude of lanes they need to be in until they actually arrive at the intersection. I have received complaint after complaint—and I have personally witnessed it—about vehicles changing lanes halfway through the intersection and then sideswipe other vehicles. Recently we had a car flip over on the intersection and eight people had to be taken to hospital.

The intersection is failing. We need this intersection fixed. The state government and Minister Bailey need to swallow some pride and work with the federal government. They need to put a business case together. I will fight tooth and nail to get some funding from the feds and from the state to get this fixed once and for all.

Other areas in my electorate desperately need help. At Henri Roberts Drive we need a deceleration lane for motorists turning left.

Mr Stevens: Build the mighty Albert shire.

Mr BOOTHMAN: Yes. The Henri Roberts Drive deceleration lane upgrade is a critical safety need. Motorists slow down to turn left to go up Tamborine Mountain on the reverse side of a blind hill. Many times, as I drive around these areas, I see motorists having to swerve out because they do not realise that the car in front is going to decelerate to turn left. This is a simple fix. It is not an expensive fix. All they need to do is start laying some asphalt on the side of road. There is already a good base to lay the new asphalt. It would not take much effort at all.

An issue of major concern for residents around the Upper Coomera area is motorists coming out of Charlies Crossing Road North onto Tamborine Oxenford Road. Motorists coming out of Charlies Crossing Road North take their lives in their hands every time they turn right at that intersection. At that intersection there is a cenotaph that has been there since 1918. It was one of the first cenotaphs on the Gold Coast. Where that cenotaph is located at the moment causes a bit of a blind spot.

Ever since council approved a new service station directly across the road from the cenotaph there is additional traffic at that intersection and around that blind spot. It is making it extremely difficult for motorists turning right at that intersection. I said to Main Roads that we need to put additional requirements on this service station because the road outside the service station is the responsibility of Main Roads. My fear was that the additional traffic would make it unsafe for motorists coming out of Charlies Crossing Road North. We desperately need a proper solution and a proper fix for this interchange.

This area has upwards of 12,000 to 14,000 car movements per day. It is a major access point for Tamborine Mountain and for workers from the area going to the Gold Coast. It is a beautiful spot. We need to look at some type of safety upgrade in that area to ensure that those motorists can leave for work in the morning safely and come home from work safely in the afternoon. Another scary part of that is that we have school buses dropping kids off in that area. They are walking across a very busy road. I cringe every time I see school students do that because I worry that one day one of them is going to be hit by a car or a truck passing through that area. I say to the minister for main roads that that is crucially important. One of the top priorities in my area in terms of fixes is Charlies Crossing Road North. If it means putting a roundabout in there to allow for free-flowing traffic that would certainly be welcomed.

I thank the government for their election commitment—something that I have been pushing for and that the LNP committed to also—around the Michigan Drive and the Tamborine Oxenford Road upgrade. That is an important intersection in my area. A major bus route uses that intersection at the moment. They turn right at that intersection. The buses can be delayed five to 10 minutes making a right hand turn at that intersection. Tamborine Oxenford Road is a very busy road. This is making it very difficult to get around. I ask the minister to hear the concerns of my residents and follow the LNP's election promise to fix this intersection.

Residents are asking for Georgina Street, which is about 50 metres down the road, to be included in the upgrade. They want a safe right turn lane from Tamborine Oxenford Road into Georgina Street. The reason they are asking for that is that it will make it safer for people coming along Tamborine Oxenford Road wanting to turn right into Georgina Street. They will not have to worry about people

behind them having to quickly decelerate because they want to make a right hand turn. I ask the minister to please take that into consideration. That is something that residents are after. They are also asking for sufficient sound barriers along that section which will potentially have new traffic lights or a roundabout.

My schools also need a helping hand. I have some very fast growing regions in my electorate. I also have schools that are haemorrhaging children because new schools are getting built in close proximity. Therefore, the population of the existing schools are dropping dramatically. One of my schools used to have up to around 1,000 students and now it has about 500. We have eight classrooms sitting idle in that school.

I ask the government and Minister Grace Grace to please take that into consideration when building new schools. We need to make sure that our older schools remain attractive through better facility management. Very importantly, a lot of the teachers in those schools have been in those areas for many years. They actually have great insight into the needs of those communities. Schools like Coomera State School are haemorrhaging population. Minister, please take that into consideration when building new schools. We are losing very good staff from the school. They are being transferred out because the school can no longer keep the staff. It is making it very difficult for that school.

Over the years the population at Park Lake State School has dramatically increased. Park Lake State School needs better facilities for the professional development of their teachers. At the moment their current staff room cannot fit all their staff. They could turn the current staff room into a classroom or a special classroom for activities for students. If the government could spend money on increasing the size of the administration block to put in a proper staff room that would be greatly appreciated. It would help with the professional development of their teachers. A covered area over the playground would certainly make the kids very happy. There is a lot that needs to be done in my area. My sporting groups desperately need help with better facilities.

It would be remiss of me not to say thank you to all the people who helped with the Theodore election campaign. I thank former opposition leader Deb Frecklington for her tireless commitment during the campaign. No person worked as hard as she did during the campaign. She was literally everywhere. I appreciated her coming to my electorate and the neighbouring electorate of Coomera and making announcement after announcement. The northern Gold Coast thanks you for recognising them as a very important part of Queensland. As Deb would certainly know, we are a fast-growing region and we need jobs and better infrastructure.

Mr Lister: They are flocking to be represented by you, mate.

Mr BOOTHMAN: I take that interjection. Do not warn him.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr BOOTHMAN: We certainly do. I want to say thank you to the team that helped me. Those who helped me are community people. They are individuals from my local Lions club, my local Rotary club and my rural fire brigades. Those individuals came out in their droves to help me during the campaign. They manned my local polling booths and spent a lot of time at the pre-poll locations. I thank you and I will endeavour to repay my debt to you over the years. I will continue to serve the community that I love.

I thank my wife and family. My wife runs my campaign and she does a fantastic job. As she says, it is interesting the life we live and the amount of time with our families we give up. These days my kids, because they have grown up a bit, do not call granddad dad they call me dad, which I appreciate. They used to see my father far more than they saw me.

It is a humbling experience. So many people came out to help us. It is a humbling experience to know that this is the fourth time I have been elected to this chamber. I give a commitment to the people of Theodore that no matter who they voted for at the last election I will do my best to help them to live their dreams in the best part of the state—which is the Gold Coast.