



Speech By
Lance McCallum

MEMBER FOR BUNDAMBA

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ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF BUNDAMBA

First Speech

Mr SPEAKER: Before calling the honourable member for Bundamba, I remind members that this is the member's first speech and it should be listened to with the courtesies reserved for such occasions. I call the member for Bundamba.

Mr McCALLUM (Bundamba—ALP) (2.56 pm): What an honour it is to rise to speak for the first time in this House. I am both humbled and excited to commence life in this parliament as a member of the Australian Labor Party. My first acknowledgement and deepest respects are to the traditional owners and custodians of the lands, Meanjin, on which we gather—the Jagera and Turrbal peoples, their elders past, present and emerging who offer us so much wisdom and inspiration. I also acknowledge the traditional owners of the Bundamba area, the Yuggera and Ugarapul people. As a proud member of the Gubbi Gubbi nation, I acknowledge my people whose lands border the Yuggera nation north of here and stretch over land and sea from the Sunshine Coast to the Burnett.

In our culture decisions are made by consensus—something that is foremost in my mind as I stand here to speak for the first time in the seat of Queensland's democracy. I am immensely proud to join the members for Algeester and Cook as the third First Nation member of the Palaszczuk Labor government—a government that history will show has walked the first steps on a path to treaty and truth telling for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people here in Queensland. I acknowledge the Premier. I know there are many places in Bundamba that hold a special place in her memory from childhood. I thank her and all ministers and fellow MPs who were able to lend their support during our campaign. I acknowledge all members of the government and indeed this parliament. I look forward to working with all of you to discuss and debate the legislation and issues that matter to our communities.

What a different world we live in today to that of only a few short months ago. Being a community representative is both an honour and a privilege that is heavy with responsibility at the best of times, and never has it been more so than during the time of coronavirus. Our local communities, our state and indeed our world are grappling with the impact of this virus, which has changed almost every facet of our lives in ways that were unthinkable only a short while ago.

At the start of March we were unaware that we would soon be seeing an end to catching up with family and friends, travelling to work, watching a movie at the cinema, heading out to a restaurant for a meal or a drink, handshakes, hugs and so much more. Thankfully, we are beginning to see a return of some of these activities, albeit within the context of the new norms of COVID-19. While this is most welcome, we are now only beginning to grapple with the ongoing health, social and economic impacts of coronavirus. There is a long way we must walk together on this road yet. The Palaszczuk government was quick to act at the beginning of this pandemic with our unprecedented \$4 billion package to support health, jobs, households and businesses which has helped limit the virus's spread and impact. The goal of flattening the curve was set, but collectively what we did was smash the curve, exceeding almost all hopes and projections in being able to reduce transmission rates.

That said, it has not been without terrible cost. I want to send my heartfelt condolences to the family, friends and loved ones of those who have lost their lives to coronavirus. Hard times can bring out the best of us, individually and collectively, and so it has proved during this pandemic, with all of us doing our part and supporting each other to limit the spread and deadly impact of this virus. Locally in West Moreton we have had only a single new confirmed case over the last month, which is testament not only to our local community but also to our frontline health workers.

Labor, the party of Medicare, has always been the party that the community can rely on to provide world-class health care. Since 2015 the Palaszczuk government has hired 536 more nurses and midwives and 164 doctors in West Moreton. Thanks to our \$146 million investment in expanded services, Ipswich Hospital will boast a new MRI machine, a 50-bed mental health ward and 26 additional beds which will mean even more permanent frontline health staff and support hundreds of jobs, including apprentices during construction. While these are record levels of investment in health, any government should not rest on its laurels. We can and should do more. I will work to see the existing hospital and site expanded even further in the future to increase capacity and services.

Labor is also synonymous with world-class education. I am proud to be part of a government that has opened eight new state schools this year, with two in the Ripley Valley alone: the new \$70 million Ripley Valley State Secondary College and the \$50 million Ripley Valley State School. We have also delivered new buildings at Fernbrooke State School and Goodna Special School. Our children deserve a world-class education, and as our community grows I will continue fighting for the upgrades and investment needed for our local schools.

Everyone in our community deserves access to a job. A large part of that comes down to skills and training. That is why we are delivering a \$7.3 million upgrade to Ipswich TAFE. During the by-election we announced a \$2 million upgrade to the Bundamba TAFE's metal trades training facility. With 260 students already accessing Labor's \$42 million TAFE and apprenticeships program in Ipswich, we will have a local pipeline of skilled young workers ready to take on emerging opportunities in our growing industries.

In my family we know firsthand the value of education, skills and training. My brother Francis, who is here today, graduated from the University of Queensland last year with a Bachelor of Biotechnology and we learnt just last week that he has been accepted into a PhD program at UQ and will start in July. Obviously as an older brother I am extremely proud of his accomplishments, but what makes me proudest is when I think that Fran, who left school in year 10 and enrolled in TAFE to finish his high school equivalency later and in turn was admitted to university and then graduated with first-class honours and a Dean's Commendation, is now about to start his PhD. It just fills me with pride. I am really proud of you, mate.

It has never been more important to keep Queenslanders in work, which is why we are investing more than \$23 billion in roads and transport, supporting local businesses and 21½ thousand jobs in the process. We have already invested in the \$400 million stage 1 upgrade of the Ipswich Motorway, which is on time and on budget and, critically, supporting over 470 jobs. Locally we have a crew of 15 working through this month and next on the River Road overpass at Dinmore to improve its longevity and safety. Our community knows it is an important link for the local meatworks, industrial centre and surrounding businesses. It is vital that we continue to roll out programs and projects such as these to support jobs as we face the economic challenges presented by coronavirus.

The reality of any growing city is that more infrastructure and services will be needed as more families move into the community. As the member for a rapidly growing electorate I want to ensure that our community grows in a sustainable and balanced way where we all share in the benefits of growth. It is the responsibility of all levels of government to ensure that developments, big or small, have as minimal impact on the environment as possible. We live in such a spectacular part of the world and a balance must be struck to preserve its nature and heritage for future generations to enjoy.

I am confident that by continuing the Palaszczuk government's commitment to consultation and engagement we will be able to successfully balance the demands of a growing local community. This preparedness to listen, a hallmark of our government, was evident when, during the by-election, rail commuters expressed to me concerns around improving access and egress at Redbank station. I took these concerns to the Minister for Transport immediately and secured a commitment to raise the platform at Redbank which I am delighted to inform the House was completed only last week. In addition to the \$3 million expansion of Ebbw Vale park-and-ride, we are also forging ahead with installing digital timetable screens at Redbank, Goodna and Dinmore stations. After spending time early in the campaign talking to locals at every train station in Bundamba on their morning commute, I know that these are small yet important improvements that will make a big difference.

Bundamba has a strong sense of community, which is in no small part derived from our proud and broad cultural diversity. People from the world over—Polynesian, African, Asian, Indian, New Zealand, European and many more—all make strong contributions to the fabric of our community. I am proud to say that I have established a close relationship with those who are working hard to celebrate and strengthen local cross-cultural relationships. One such organisation is the Polynesian African cross-cultural advisory group who work out of Goodna Neighbourhood House. I had the privilege of joining with them during the campaign to discuss their vision for our local community and I look forward to cementing this relationship by doing what I can to assist their important work to celebrate and capitalise on the great cultural power in our local community.

Being inclusive, tolerant and supporting one another is something that I believe in deeply. I have been subject to my share of racism and I have seen others be persecuted for their origin, religion, body shape, gender or sexuality simply because the perception of them by others was one of an often illusionary difference. Unfortunately it still happens today and in many cases is deliberately weaponised to suit particular agendas. I will always strive to call out this insidious behaviour and will always choose acceptance, collectiveness and unity over fear, distrust and division and staunchly support those who work in our communities to celebrate diversity and inclusiveness.

The people of Bundamba, like the majority of people across Queensland, want jobs—jobs that are purposeful, secure and can provide a decent standard of living for them and their loved ones. There is dignity in work. However, that dignity can be eroded when workers cannot find stable jobs that pay a decent living wage. Unfortunately we continue to see an ever-increasing prevalence of insecure work for ordinary workers in all of its forms: casualisation, labour hire, contracting and outsourcing to name but a few.

I have been fortunate to have, for the most part, good jobs that I have been passionate about, but it was not until quite late in my working life, in my 30s, that I was able to secure permanent employment. Having until then mostly been on contracts, I and the banks considered it too much of a risk for me to buy a home. The uncertainty that can stem from insecure work is what keeps people in the working class suburbs of Bundamba up at night. I know this because they have told me—like the labour hire worker at Dinmore who works at a nearby factory and is worried every time the roster comes out that they may not be given enough hours to pay the bills, or the healthcare worker in Redbank Plains who is wondering how they could pay the mortgage or the kids' school fees if their three-, six- or 12-month contract is not rolled over or extended, or the educator in Collingwood Park who is worried that their job is going to be outsourced and they will be faced with the choice to either quit or lose over 30 per cent of their pay and conditions.

Looking back now to my childhood, with seven people in my family in a three-bedroom house with a single working wage to support us, there was no way we would have been able to survive if my father's job had not been secure. It was modest but it was secure and that meant stability—stability of accommodation, education and the basics of what a family needs to survive. As we begin to rebuild our coronavirus impacted economy, with so many unemployed, underemployed and seeking more work or having given up on looking for work altogether, all through circumstances beyond their control, it has never been more important to provide as many secure local jobs as possible.

I stand here in this place as a representative and voice of the ordinary workers and battlers in Bundamba who want someone to fight for a fair go on their behalf—a fair go that means the opportunity to live and work in a community where you and your family have access to quality services and can get help and support when you need it. Supporting each other is something that Queenslanders do naturally. We ban together in the face of hardship, be it fires, floods, cyclones or coronavirus. This simple act of people sticking together for a common purpose is ingrained in us. You see it everywhere, from teams to clubs, associations, societies, alliances, chambers, political parties and the list goes on. Collective action for working people through their unions to make considered and mature representation on their behalf is something that has always been and will always be critical to a fair, progressive and equitable society.

I have been privileged to have had the opportunity to work for the labour movement, fighting to improve the lives of working people, particularly with the mighty Electrical Trades Union. I take much pride in my role with the Not4Sale campaign that protected our publicly owned energy assets from being sold off and privatised. This included Swanbank Power Station in my electorate which, after being mothballed and prepped for sale, was brought back into service by the Palaszczuk government and now forms part of CleanCo, the groundbreaking publicly owned clean energy company. I firmly believe that public assets should remain in public hands, particularly when those assets are a physical and market monopoly that provide essential services to the community and any profits can be reinvested into public services and infrastructure. We need to ensure that these assets are protected now and into

the future, not sold off to overseas multinationals for short-term profit. I will fight to ensure that our publicly owned assets remain the property of Queensland taxpayers and that the governments that oversee them remain accountable to the people who own them.

I want to thank and acknowledge comrades from the ETU who have offered me so much support and advice. To Ongy, Stuey, Andrew, Macca, Lynchy, Hicksy, Michael, Lara, Trevor and Dave and all of the officials and members of the ETU family: thank you. I want to make special mention of a comrade who has been a little crook over the past couple of years. Simmo, thanks for your vision, values and heart. You are a true inspiration. Keep fighting, mate. We are with you.

If you rewound the clock to September 1992, you would find me letterboxing for a man named Wayne Goss. He went on to win a second term as premier, with Labor returning to government with a 54-seat majority. Growing up, particularly as a young Indigenous bloke, I found political expression through collective action and the labour movement. I have been raised to believe that together we can make a difference. I grew up in awe of Labor giants such as Whitlam and Hawke, who viewed education as the fundamental ingredient for equity and opportunity, who introduced a universal healthcare system and who have stood with First Nation people in our struggle.

The movement that stood for these things was irresistible to me and I relish the opportunity to contribute to our party's legacy as a member in this place. Since the re-creation of the electorate in 1991, the Bundamba community has always trusted Labor to fight for a fair go on their behalf and I want to acknowledge the work of former members Jo-Ann Miller and Bob Gibbs. Jo-Ann was a fierce advocate for 20 years and I wish her good health and happiness. I said during the campaign that I would be Bundamba's representative in Brisbane, not the other way around—and I meant it. I will continue the legacy of Labor delivering for Bundamba by fighting tooth and nail for a fair go.

I am the eldest of five children. My father worked in the Public Service while Mum looked after us kids. We grew up happy, in a very modest house in the Redlands, with bunk beds to fit us all in. As is the case for many working-class families, while we did not have material wealth we were rich in the things that really matter. We are and always will be a close-knit family and words will never be enough to convey the depth and breadth of my gratitude.

To my mum, Elizabeth: your sacrifice, compassion and strength for those you love knows no boundary. To my dad, Patrick: thank you for setting such a fine example and providing the advice we always needed and the patience that we probably did not always deserve. To my siblings, Robert, Jodie, Daniel and Francis: you are all inspirations to me. Thank you for your endless support and love. I acknowledge all of my aunts, uncles and cousins, as well as my ancestors. Although they may no longer be with us in body, they are in spirit, having forged the path we walk on today, as we remember that we will do the same for those who come after us.

Humble thanks go to my close friends who, as close friends do, have shared life's many trials, triumphs and tribulations over the years. To Marty, Troy, Jon, Sascha, Susanne, Jagdeep, AJ, Neil, Scotty, Shaun, Robbo: thank you for always being there. To my campaign director and friend, Peter Allen: we have had some fun and done a few things over the last 30-odd years, mate. You are as staunch in your values as you are generous with your intellect. To the Bundamba campaign crew of Bisma, Jess, Ben Brew, Elliot and every volunteer who supported the campaign and, for their wise counsel, the members for Miller and Kurwongbah and Julie-Ann Campbell: thank you, all. Let us do it all again in October. I also want to acknowledge Milton Dick, Shayne Neumann and the members for Ipswich, Ipswich West and Jordan for their support and advice. I look forward to working together to deliver for our community.

I am committed to working tirelessly to make Bundamba and Queensland a better place for all of us, regardless of who you happen to be or where you come from. I am here to ensure that we get the services and infrastructure that our growing community deserves, whilst preserving the beauty of our natural environment. I am here to fight for a Bundamba where our community can access secure local jobs and the very best in services, like education, training, health care and public transport. The people of Bundamba have put their trust in me and I do not intend to let them down.