




Speech By
Andrew Powell

MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

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ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (5.22 pm): It is with mixed emotions that I rise to contribute to the address-in-reply this afternoon. At the outset I say that it is absolutely wonderful to have the honour to represent the people of Glass House for a third term. I think all who have been in this House for more than one term know just how special it is to continue to have the faith of the people you represent placed in you.

If I can just pause for a moment, I want to give a wonderful example of why we do what we do. Yesterday morning I spoke of Steve and Donna Smith, a young couple who had water thigh high go through their house and who had had Energex come out and say that the house was unsafe to reside in. Donna is 32 weeks pregnant. I do acknowledge that that morning the government had included their street in the disaster declarations and that the government and Red Cross were working with them to achieve an outcome. Unfortunately, that outcome was not suitable for someone who is 32 weeks pregnant. At this point I acknowledge Minister Miller, who came to me yesterday and said, 'If there's anything more we can do, please let me know.' When I got notification from the Smiths today, I spoke to Minister Miller and within a matter of minutes she had rung the family and then my electorate office. I have just received from the mother and aunt of Mr Smith a message, which reads—

Dear Mr Powell, this is the mother and aunty of Steven Smith from Male Road, Caboolture. We are just texting you to thank you with all we have as the tears are streaming down our faces and unable to talk. Jo-Ann Miller has rung us this afternoon to help and we just cannot thank you enough. Cheers, Barbara and Dianne.

I think that sums up perfectly why we do what we do.

As I said, I am here this afternoon with mixed emotions because I do acknowledge that considerably fewer people in Glass House voted for me in 2015 than in 2012. That is certainly not lost on me.

Mr Mander: Is that why you have the beard?

Mr POWELL: I actually have the beard because it has been five weeks since the last sitting—long enough that even I can grow a dodgy resemblance to a beard! That is why I have it, member for Everton. I acknowledge that I need to address the concerns the people of Glass House clearly expressed at the 2015 election.

I must begin by thanking my family, who continue to support me in my role as member for Glass House. My wife, Taryn, is probably the most patient, supportive, incredible woman I know. If people got to know her themselves they would agree. It is fair to say that our five children are who they are today because of what Taryn does each and every day. Honey, I love you so much. Thank you for what you do to support me, for the love that we share and for the fact that we celebrated 17 years of marriage this year. I look forward to 34 more, or even more than that.

Mrs Frecklington: How did you come up with 34?

Mr POWELL: Seventeen and 34: what will that make me? Too old! Hopefully it will be a lot longer than that.

To my man about the house, my big boy Dan, recently turned 14: I am just so proud of you, mate. While I have been absent over the past three years as a minister you have really stepped up. You have looked after the family. You have looked after Mum. You have looked after the place. It is awesome that you made the rep soccer team this year. I look forward to catching a few games, because I have the time to do it now.

To my 12-year-old daughter Erin, who is just so smart and so switched on: I know we are going to share a lot more time geocaching around the Sunshine Coast over the coming months because, again, I will have a bit of time to do it.

Brielle: happy birthday for yesterday, my princess. Daddy is again sorry that I was not there to join in the festivities with you but I look forward to seeing you pretty soon.

Ben, my cheeky little monkey: we are going to have a lot more time together. I just wish I shared your passion for sharks. It is not something Dad is going to get involved in, but I know we will have fun all the same, matey.

Beautiful Rohanna: it is hard to believe that last week you turned five. This is a child who was born once I became a member of parliament. It is scary how fast that time has passed and that you are now five. You are just such a beautiful blessing to us as a family.

The children are certainly starting to not know a time when I was not the member for Glass House. As I have alluded to, one of the blessings of now being back in opposition is that I will certainly have a lot more time to spend with them.

I also thank the staff in my electorate office. Alaina, why you are still with me I do not know. It has now been some 6½ years. I know that you have taken time off to have your two wonderful children, but I just thank you so much. Jen, it is great to have you back. We are back to the original EO staff that we kicked off with six years ago, and that is just wonderful. I also want to acknowledge Katie. I was sorry to lose you but I was so pleased to see you up in the gallery earlier supporting your new boss in Matt McEachan, the member for Redlands. Gemma, I hope life in Brisbane is treating you well and that it has worked out to be all that you wanted it to be. I also mention Nicole and most recently Carol. No, I do not go through exorbitant numbers of staff; they just tend to have children often, so we have to replace them. They are a bit like me!

We have a lot to be proud of in Glass House. We achieved so much over the past three years. If anything, we failed to get that word out to the people of Glass House as much as we should have. I mention things like funding for the upgrade of the D'Aguilar Highway. I know that the constituents of the member for Nanango will rejoice in this also. We have just announced that tenders are out for the work that will include an overtaking lane between the Gamgee roads; surface improvements; improvements to the intersection of Williams and Gamgee roads and at Canando Street, Woodford; and general visibility and safety improvements, some of which have already happened.

With the community's support we have been able to achieve funding for traffic lights at Reed Street and Steve Irwin Way in the Glasshouse Mountains, with construction to start later this year. We achieved extra police officers at Maleny, Woodford and Palmwoods police stations. We achieved public transport fare cuts, and I acknowledge the former minister for transport here this evening for all of the efforts he made to ensure that we not only halved Labor's previous price increases but cut them by five per cent—the first time in history.

So many clubs in the Glass House electorate received Get Playing grant funding, and I acknowledge the former minister for sport—clubs like Sunshine Coast Bowmen, Maleny Bowls Club, Wamuran netball, Maleny swimming club, Maleny junior rugby union club, Conondale Swimming Pool Committee, Caboolture Sports Club, Maleny District Sports and Recreation Club, Maleny Rangers, Landsborough Tennis Club, Wamuran Little Athletics, Palmwoods Bowls, Elimbah Ladybirds Netball Club, Maleny Golf Club, Palmwoods and Western District Junior Rugby League Football Club and the Caboolture PCYC. Other community grant funding went to groups such as Delaneys Creek State School, Montville Village Association, the Compass Institute, Woodford Scout Group, Delaneys Creek Rural Fire Brigade, Peachester History Committee, Palmwoods Memorial Hall, Glasshouse Districts Cricket Club, Woodford and Region Men's Shed, Beerburrum School of Arts, Woodford RSL Sub Branch, Palmwoods Tennis Club, Maleny junior rugby union team, Glass House Mountains Rural Fire Brigade and Wamuran and District Men's Shed.

We achieved flashing lights at Woodford, Wamuran, Beerburrum, Elimbah and Chevallum schools and after 10 years of requesting a 40-kilometre zone at Montville State School—not flashing lights but a 40-kilometre zone—we achieved it, with that happening last term. That is a fantastic outcome. We also achieved funding for Lavally Lodge, a disability service provider—recurrent funding for Lavally Lodge in the Glasshouse Mountains—and we also provided Everyone's Environment grants to Barung Landcare, GMAN and the Blackall Range Lions club. We achieved recurrent funding

of \$50,000 per year for Maleny Neighbourhood Centre, Palmwoods State School became an independent state school, two new express rail services on the Sunshine Coast rail line, a new state primary school at Caboolture on Pumicestone Road, a new 657 bus servicing that same part of Caboolture—again, something we fought for for so long—and close to \$2 million in funding to clear school maintenance backlogs. That is a huge amount that we achieved and I am so pleased that we have been able to do that for the people of Glass House. I know there is more to do and we are committed to doing that.

I also acknowledge my fantastic ministerial office—to Troy, Lyn, Fiona, Brooke, Aaron, Abbey, Shannon, Erin and Carl—and also acknowledge the contributions over the years from Alex, Ken, Karen, Frangi and Margaret at various times. In the same way we have so much to be proud of. The Newman LNP government has a record of achievement of delivering across-the-board, including in the environmental portfolio. Again, much of what we achieved has perhaps gone unnoticed, but we know we did so much to create a better environment and a more nimble, more modern regulator that ensures that that environment remains protected into the future. I thank the departmental staff including Andrew and Jon and their team of Dean, Tony and Tamara and all of the staff who worked within the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection. What did we achieve? Probably first and foremost was a considerable culture change within the department of environment. Gone are the days of DERM. What we have is a department in EHP that accepts its responsibility of protecting the environment but is there to work with the people who want to create jobs so that both can be achieved. That was a huge job—a huge job—and I again commend the work of Andrew in leading that change management.

In terms of green-tape reduction, we have lost 9,500 environmentally relevant activity administrative burdens on business—9,500! We are now almost on par with states like New South Wales, but we have so much further to go and I hope the Palaszczuk government continues this work. We could still aspire to Victoria where, with a similar population and with a far larger manufacturing industry, it only has 700 ERAs in the entire state. We are around 4,500. New South Wales is at about 3,500 and WA is at about 1,200. There is more green-tape work that can be done.

With regard to the Great Barrier Reef, contrary to what those opposite will say, much of what has been achieved over the last three years has been achieved because of the combined efforts of the LNP government at the state level and the LNP coalition at the federal government level. If the Great Barrier Reef is not listed in danger this year, it will not be because of the three months effort of Dr Miles; it will be because of the work over the last three years of the LNP government. We worked with our canefarmers and our graziers in putting in place BMPs where we are not asking them to fill in copious amounts of paperwork and sending them to jail if they do not. We are working with them cooperatively for the benefit of their industries and for the benefit of the environment.

Our Everyone's Environment grants were such a great initiative that saw people who have never got out of their houses and participated in protecting the environment do so. Scout groups, Lions groups, Apex groups, youth groups, churches and our heritage area all achieved funding through these programs and it was wonderful to see. We implemented the toughest penalties and sentences within environmental legislation in this state ever, and that included increasing our penalties and sentences for damaging the Great Barrier Reef—something that those opposite could not even support and yet they claim they are better for the Great Barrier Reef. We added one million hectares to nature refuge, taking the overall total to four million. For the first time our koala package addressed all of the causes of concern in declining koala numbers. Most importantly, there was our \$3.2 million to disease research and prevention. This has led to the first successful wild trial of a chlamydia vaccine that will now be rolled out across the state for every koala we come in contact with. Again, Labor will try to take credit for the national park acquisitions we have made over the last three years, but I and the team know better. We know we worked on a scientific basis, we know we worked on ensuring connectivity and we know that those strategic acquisitions will truly add to the protected area estate of this great state. The ALP will try to take credit for what we did, but we know we did the hard yards and we know we have turned the environmental portfolio on its ear and we should be duly proud of that.

I want to pick up on something else that I am very proud of in the last three years, and the member for Gympie acknowledged this too—that is, the Queensland Plan. I just listened to the member for Lytton in her maiden speech suggest that we did not consult with the people of Queensland. Through the Queensland Plan more than 70,000 Queenslanders had direct input into the future of this great state for the next 30 years. Again, what did those opposite do? They rejected it and they refused to accept the input of 70,000 Queenslanders in guiding Queensland for the next 30 years. That was a fantastic initiative. It has received awards from around the state, the nation and the world. It has received plaudits from community engagement practitioners throughout the world.

I mentioned earlier that I heard loud and clear from the people of Glass House. I know I need to do more, and I will talk briefly in a moment as to what that is. I just want to refer to an article in the *Australian* from 19 March this year that states—

Our political system is not delivering. This is now obvious to the community. There is little sign the political system can address the nation's problems: a fractured budget, unsustainable spending programs, unproductive industry, entrenched inequity and insufficient infrastructure. It is true the nation is not in crisis yet this repeated invocation is recruited to excuse the status quo.

The article continues—

Reform is a lost political art in this country ...

The power of the negative campaign has never been stronger ... Yet the nation cannot solve its long-run problems short of unpopular measures.

The voices of the aggrieved dominate the media and political debate at the expense of the public interest. The media weight given in the 1980s to national interest reform is long since lost. Australia is trapped between challenges that demand long-run brave policies and a political culture addicted to cynical, short-termism and cultivation of votes on grievance.

I think that sums up the fact that we are in a challenging political landscape where to truly reform and truly set this state on a path for a greater future is going to be captivated by those who have short-term focus, those who are NIMBYs—not in my backyard—and want to naysay everything. I think it is a challenge not only for this side of politics but also for the other side and I look forward to seeing how those opposite grapple with it. As I said to the people of Glass House, I do need to listen more and I need to do more and over the last couple of months we have been pulling together a list of things that we need to work on: we need to find out what the Labor government is going to do about the north coast rail duplication, the Jubilee Drive intersection at Palmwoods, a permanent school crossing supervisor at Chevallum, upgrades to the Maleny-Kenilworth Road, an indoor aquatic centre at Maleny, a kiss and go at Maleny State School, an upgraded police station at Maleny, flashing lights at Peachester school, air conditioning for Glass House Mountains State School, an upgrade to King John Creek bridge at Elimbah and parking at Caboolture Hospital—something we funded and had in the budget.

Also, there are speed reductions near County Drive on the D'Aguilar Highway and pedestrian crossings in Woodford, also on the D'Aguilar Highway. They are just some of the things that I will be fighting for over this coming term.

Before I conclude, I must also thank my local LNP team, led by the staunch and indomitable Greg and Joyce Newton. There are just so many people in my four branches of Palmwoods, Maleny, Glass House-Beerwah and Woodford-Wamuran so I cannot mention them all individually. But I know that, compared to many of my colleagues, I had more people on my campaign team than many had in their entire LNP membership in their electorates and I am very grateful for that effort. I thank them so much for what they have done. We worked so hard. We have taken a knock, we have talked that through and we will be the stronger for it.

As I conclude, I would like to acknowledge four constituents who no longer call Glass House home: two who have relocated and two who are looking down on us from above. The world is made up of two kinds of people: Glass House residents and aspirational Glass House residents. So it has come as quite a shock that Neil and Deb Cook have chosen to leave Glass House and make Lockyer their home. I have spoken to them of the dangers of going to an electorate serviced by someone like Ian Rickuss, but they have stuck by their decision and they have moved to the town of Laidley. Neil and Deb are stalwarts of the Mount Mee community. Neil was involved with the Mount Mee hall and the Mount Mee Rural Fire Brigade. He also ran the community newsletter. We just worked so well together and Neil did so much for the community. I want to acknowledge that couple and tell Ian Rickuss that he has a lot to live up to. He had better look after them.

I also acknowledge the passing of Beryl Newton and Keith Beitz. Beryl Newton was over 100. Beryl turned up at my preselection seven years ago. I will never forget her and Mrs Olga Webster sitting in the front row and saying afterwards, 'We changed our vote after the first vote. We wanted you as our member.' I am here today because of Mrs Beryl Newton. It is a great loss, but we know that she is where she wanted to be. I ask her to please keep looking down on us. She had a teacher approach to everything. We lived in fear of Beryl, even when she was in her nineties. She was just so wonderful. The other loss was Keith Beitz, otherwise known as Chooka, from Glass House Mountains. Keith was a supporter who, in his late years, in many of my election campaigns would go out doorknocking with me. Afterwards, I would share with him a cold ale on his back deck. I thank him. My thoughts are with Maisie and his extended family.

I am determined to serve. I am determined to deliver for the people of Glass House. It is for people like Neil and Deb Cook and because of people like Beryl Newton and Keith Beitz that I am where I am and I do what I do. I thank each and every one of them for that privilege and that honour.