




Speech By  
**Hon. Mark Bailey**  
**MEMBER FOR YEERONGPILLY**

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Record of Proceedings, 2 June 2015

**ADDRESS-IN-REPLY**

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy and Water Supply) (9.28 pm): First of all, I acknowledge that we gather here on the traditional lands of the Jagera and Turrbal peoples, and I offer their elders past and present my respect for their custodianship of this ancient land over more than 60,000 years. We have much yet to learn and understand from one of the oldest continuing cultures in the world, and it is my hope that our society benefits from a deeper understanding of the long and rich history of our country.

I would also like to acknowledge that I am here because of the people of the south side of Brisbane. I would like to thank the people of the seat of Yeerongpilly who have placed their faith in me to represent them in the Queensland parliament. It is a great honour to be granted this role by the people via a free and fair election in a peaceful democratic nation—something that so many are still fighting to achieve right across the world.

I commit myself to fight every day on behalf of my constituents for greater opportunities through better education and health services. I commit myself to fight for a fair justice system where people are treated equally before the law no matter what their circumstances; for a culture of government where people are treated with respect and their participation is valued and encouraged; for the right to a job and a fair day's work for a fair day's pay in a safe workplace free of discrimination; for the right of every person to be able to go about their lives without the threat or the reality of domestic violence.

I am aware that I follow in formidable footsteps in Yeerongpilly, formerly known as Yeronga before the 2001 redistribution. It is the former seat of Labor great Matt Foley, whom I welcome to the gallery tonight—a four-time cabinet minister and attorney-general at a crucial time for justice in Queensland, an MP who played a crucial role in abolishing the gerrymander as the EARC chair under then Premier Wayne Goss and, I might say, someone who did more than anybody to ensure women were adequately represented on the judiciary. Yeerongpilly is also the former seat of former minister Simon Finn, who is still much loved on the south side for his absolute commitment to flood recovery after the 2011 floods, and Carl Judge, a very decent man who bravely left a government with a record majority in its first year to sit on the crossbenches on a matter of principle.

Yeerongpilly is made up of the suburbs of Tarragindi, Moorooka, Nathan, Salisbury, Yeronga, Fairfield, Clifton Hill, Ekibin, Wellers Hill, Moorvale and parts of Rocklea, Macgregor and Annerley. I have had the privilege of representing many of those suburbs as a city councillor on the Brisbane City Council. It is a community with an increasingly diverse population. An important part of that community is Toohey Forest, which many people use, along with other remnant bushland areas, for recreation. I believe that is one of the reasons my constituents are so committed to the environment.

We have excellent schools. We have many state schools, such as Moorooka, Rocklea, Yeronga, Wellers Hill, Salisbury and Junction Park just over the northern border; and private primary schools such as St Elizabeth's, Our Lady's, Mary mac, St Brendan's, St Sebastian's, St Pius and Brisbane Christian College, which will take over the now-closed Nyanda high school site in 2016. It is a great joy in this role working with principals, P&Cs and P&Fs to ensure students get the best possible start in life.

We have many active community hubs and clubs—Yeronga Community Centre, Annerley/Moorooka Senior Citizens, Annerley Traders Uncovered, sports and bowls clubs—right across the suburbs, as well as many local sporting groups such as AFL, Rugby, soccer at Tarragindi Tigers, and swimming the Yeronga pool. It is a thriving constituency of community activity and commitment. Just as I did as a local councillor, I am committed to working closely with all my community groups to improve the lifestyle of south siders.

I ran at the 2015 state election for much the same reason I joined the Labor Party in 1985, 30 years ago. I saw a government with regressive values out of touch with Queenslanders, a government which quickly reneged on its election promises and ruled Queensland—I use the word ‘ruled’ advisedly—like it was still the Bjelke-Petersen era. The environment once again was under attack on a daily basis and seen only for its economic value. Environmental sustainability was removed from coastal planning, plans to phase out sandmining on the magnificent North Stradbroke Island were revoked and protection for the Great Barrier Reef was ignored. Despite telling Queenslanders at the 2012 election that it had no plans to mine uranium, it took the former government only six months to jettison that promise to Queenslanders. I might add, there has been no mandate for a party with a pro-uranium-mining stance in this state since 1986—nearly 30 years.

There have been more than a few instances of major LNP donors receiving privileged access and treatment starting to appear in the media, just like in the 1980s. More than 1,500 nurses lost their jobs and teacher intakes were cut from about 650 per year to 140, leaving many graduates with no prospects of a career. Workers’ rights and conditions were systematically undermined and laws were passed in attempts to nobble those who represent them in the workplace: the union movement. Our justice system was undermined and modern, effective legal reforms like the Murri Court, the Drug Court and diversionary programs were abolished. The law and order drum was beaten in a ‘here we Joh again’ exercise and some people were arrested under association provisions under the VLAD laws. Apparently locking up a librarian for five days was meant to make us all feel safer! Not surprisingly, unemployment in Queensland surged from 5.5 per cent to over seven per cent, ending at 6.8 per cent by the time of the last election. Of course, public servants were under attack not long after being assured before the 2012 election that they were safe.

When I knocked on thousands of doors during the election campaign I had the same conversation over and over again with public servants and ex-public servants. It goes something like this: ‘They said we’d be safe if we voted for the LNP. Once the election was over they moved to get rid of thousands of us. It didn’t make a lot of sense who was removed and we couldn’t get the work done so contractors at higher pay rates were brought in to fill the gaps and sometimes, to rub it in, they were the same people who had lost their jobs.’

Within months of the election in 2012 I could see a Bjelke-Petersen 2.0 government emerge, all too quickly using the Robert Sparkes playbook from the 1980s of divide and rule. What is surprising is just how little, after being in opposition for 20 out of 22½ years, they had actually learned about the people of Queensland.

As someone with nine years experience on the city council, in the progressive and successful administration under one of Brisbane’s great lord mayors, Jim Soorley, I could not stand back and watch this happen to Queensland and do nothing. I could not stand by and watch the award-winning Nyanda high school in Salisbury be closed without a fight. I could not stand by and watch ordinary Queenslanders trying to help the environment and manage their surging electricity bills with solar PV on their rooftops be vilified by the then treasurer as champagne sippers and latte drinkers. I could not stand by and watch parkland being sold off at Kellett Road in Salisbury without helping the community fight to save it. I could certainly not stand by and watch one of Brisbane’s oldest train stations, at Dutton Park on the edge of my electorate, next to a major hospital, be closed—denying local people, including visually impaired people, public transport. I could not stand by and watch our justice system be eroded under the former attorney-general. I could not stand by and watch the bipartisan Fitzgerald reforms be unravelled for the first time in a quarter of a century. Today Queenslanders remain as committed as ever—lock, stock and barrel—to those Fitzgerald anti-corruption reforms.

Queenslanders have high standards and they want a fair justice system, they want protection of their environment and they want action to address climate change. They certainly want action to protect the Great Barrier Reef. They want a fair go by a well-resourced education system. They want an education model which targets disadvantage based on sound empirical research centring on kids in remote areas, those with a disability, those from non-English-speaking backgrounds and those from Indigenous backgrounds, to give them a hand up. They understand the need to target limited resources to where they are most needed in the education system and are looking beyond the old model of public/private systems.

Queenslanders on the south side told me during the campaign that they need a more balanced transport system—that plenty of people are finding it far too expensive as it stands and are using their cars instead. We have to deal with the South-East Queensland rail capacity crisis, where the single inner-city river crossing simply will not be able to cope in a few years as it reaches saturation point on Merivale Bridge.

Many residents also told me during the campaign that they resent losing their right to have a say in new development proposals in their street and in their suburb under the new Brisbane City Plan, brought down last year by the LNP city council. They have no faith that the council is interested in enforcing the provisions within the city plan and feel that the council has sold out the community in favour of developers. As a former deputy chair of planning in Brisbane over nine years, I know they are right.

**Mr Nicholls:** That's what they said about your plan in 2000, mate. I remember you. You said the same thing in 2000. It was your plan!

**Mr BAILEY:** I take the interjection from the member for Clayfield.

**Mr Nicholls:** It was your plan!

**Mr BAILEY:** This is the second chamber I have shared with him and I might add that I have not spent a day on the opposition benches while I have shared a chamber with him and I do not intend to any time soon. Cutting local residents out of the development process inevitably leads to lower grade, more intense developments which do not take into account the community in which they are located. I call on Lord Mayor Quirk to immediately review his pro-developer City Plan and restore the dozen or so rights residents have had revoked under his administration and start enforcing the provisions that still exist in the City Plan. If you cannot have a say you have no opportunity to participate in the local development process. That is not an inclusive culture that Brisbane residents, particularly on the south side, deserve.

Importantly, Queenslanders want renewable energy and for governments to manage the transition to cleaner energy which is happening now worldwide. They expect state governments to show leadership and to work with consumers and the energy industry to sustainably transition to clean energy which helps to address climate change. As the new energy minister in Queensland, it is an exciting time to play a role in implementing Labor's election promises and to build positive relationships with the renewable energy sector to create jobs, attract investment and increase our renewable energy capacity in Queensland. South Australia has left Queensland behind in this regard, with over a third of its power now coming from renewable energy compared to only about a 14 per cent capacity here in Queensland. But I am happy to say that already this government through the Deputy Premier has approved a 225 megawatt wind farm at Mount Emerald which now sits with the federal government for approval in terms of power capacity.

Last week I held a roundtable consultation with renewable energy leaders in Queensland and will hold a broader forum this month to collaborate on the opportunities that exist for our state in the renewable energy sector. The Palaszczuk government is looking at industries of the future through our Advance Queensland plan to encourage business research and development and our \$40 million Business Development Fund to turn ideas into commercial realities. The continued hostility to renewable energy by the federal Abbott government via its reduction and then long-term avoidance of adopting a renewable energy target has been a disaster over the last 12 months as investment in renewable energy has plunged by 88 per cent and cost thousands of jobs across our nation, including the 1,300 jobs that we lost here in Queensland over the last three years. It is hard to imagine any other industry being allowed to plunge in such a way through deliberate government intransigence and inaction. While a reduced RET at 33,000 gigawatts is not preferable, it at least now gives the renewable energy sector some certainty to invest in projects and get them going.

It is also a pleasure working with our staff in the Department of Energy and Water Supply. I thank them for all of their hard work over the last three months as they get used to a new government and a new agenda. Likewise, I also thank the staff at TMR and our government owned corporations who work hard. Working with the department and road safety stakeholders like CARRS-Q, RACQ, Queensland Trucking Association, Motorcycle Riders Association, Bicycle Queensland as well as the Queensland police and the Minister for Police as our first road safety minister, it is a great honour and privilege to look at how we can address the road toll which has spiked since the Easter weekend.

I am proud to be part of this government—a government full of courageous people from a wide variety of occupations who ran for the right reasons. To those who underestimate the Palaszczuk government, I wish them luck. Of course, to be fair, few thought that an election victory for Labor was possible in 2015 with 78 MPs versus seven after the 2012 election. Many of my now current

colleagues knew that the odds were against them and that it may well be two terms before the former Newman government could be defeated given its mammoth and record majority, yet they ran anyway—a diverse team including teachers, a power worker, a childcare director, a few lawyers, four current or former local city councillors, some union organisers, some ambos as well as two former federal representatives. The Palaszczuk government knows about front-line workers because we have them in our party room. When I look at the Palaszczuk government in our party room I see real-life experience. That is the kind of experience that this parliament needs.

Equally, it is an honour to serve in a new Palaszczuk government that has 15 times the cabinet level experience that the Newman government had three years before, and doesn't that show! It is also an honour to be in a cabinet with eight women out of 14—a record in Australian politics. With only seven Labor MPs in the last term of parliament, I want to use my experience from the city council to help Labor rebuild and also to represent as strongly as I possibly can the south siders in the Yeerongpilly electorate. No party wins 35 seats in an 89-seat parliament in one election without effective leadership and solid policies. We put more than 50 policies to the people in January, and that is one of the key reasons why we received 50.9 per cent of the two-party preferred vote.

Perhaps no opposition leader in Australia has had a steeper cliff to climb than the current Premier, the member for Inala. The Premier has offered steady and sure government for this state—an inclusive government with modern values, respectful of people, committed to collegiate government, working with stakeholders and implementing our election promises, a government which has committed to working closely with people and listening. Over the last three years, together with our small and effective Labor caucus, the now Premier had the courage as the opposition leader to apologise to Queenslanders for Labor getting it wrong in the parliament from 2009 to 2012, reconnected with people and developed over 50 policies in partnership with stakeholders. Those who allege this government has no plan deliberately and conveniently ignore this solid grassroots policy spadework over three years.

I want to pay tribute to all members of the Labor team in the last term for their courage and their commitment, including the retired members for Mackay and Woodridge. Every MP in this chamber is here because of the tremendous support of the many committed and passionate people who believe in a fair and just society and are willing to fight for it.

I want to thank everyone who contributed to the Yeerongpilly Labor campaign over nine months. It was certainly an election night for the ages. The first person I want to thank of course is my No. 1 supporter—my mother, Beryl Bailey, who is in the gallery tonight. I am a kid from a single-parent, working-class family, inspired by Gough Whitlam and Gandhi as a teenager, who went to public schools and who had an education that was supported and prioritised at home. Despite my mother, Beryl, being—let us say—comfortably in her 80s, her energy and zest for life is an inspiration to everyone who knows her.

To my campaign director Sandeep Sarathy and assistant campaign director Felix Gibson, I cannot thank them enough for their commitment, good humour, energy and patience. To long-time friends Jo Justo and Lurline Comerford, thank you for being there always with no questions asked. Thanks, too, to my long-time supporters—Councillor Steve Griffiths, Councillor Helen Abrahams, Graham Perrett MP and Terri Butler MP as well as our diehard and committed campaigners Cath Rafferty, John Hegerty, Robin and Ken Boyne, Scarlett Squire, Steve Harvey, Mary-Ellen Ryan, Melina Chalmers, Dale Evans, Edwina and Frank Crowther, Simon Finn, Kym Haynes, Ines Almeida, Norm Bullen, Tom Dixon, Frank and Loretta Carroll, Rod Biesel, Amy Hunter, Steve Bredhauer, Jane McTaggart, Noel Morris and all of our wonderful branch members at Salisbury, Yeronga and Annerley branches.

I also want to thank the ETU in Queensland and its leadership, not just for its support of my campaign but for standing up for working people in Queensland right throughout the last term. Getting to know power workers over the last few years has been a great privilege. They are the guys who work with industrial levels of power where if you make one mistake you are dead. They are the people who put your power back on under extreme circumstances. After Tropical Cyclone Marcia they reconstructed our power system in only 12 days—half the time it took after Yasi. I also want to thank the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union and the Rail Tram and Bus Union for their support—Owen Doogan, Rohan Webb, Jules Campbell and Peter Allen. It has been a great pleasure working with my current staff Denise Spinks, Ellen McIntyre, Karen Robinson, Kate Griffiths, Tamerlan van Alphen, Stephen Johnson, Gai Duffy and Pauline Peel.

*(Time expired)*