




Speech By
Ray Stevens

MEMBER FOR MERMAID BEACH

Record of Proceedings, 14 October 2015

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (5.27 pm): I rise today with enormous gratitude to the voters of Mermaid Beach to present my address-in-reply, having been re-elected to represent the people of the Mermaid Beach electorate for the duration of the 55th Parliament. However, in doing so I would like to severely condemn the Leader of the House for taking six months to have this particular address-in-reply put on the agenda, treating the Governor's speech—the Queen's representative in Queensland—as a political football and making it a fill-in when it should have the highest priority to this parliament. Obviously some of the matters that were conceived at the time when this address-in-reply should have been delivered will not be as relevant today as they were six months ago.

First and foremost today, I congratulate my fellow members of parliament upon their election or re-election, as the case may be. I welcome our new LNP members to these hallowed halls. They are in for an exciting ride in this tightly hung parliament when, more than ever, every vote on every issue or bill will be counted.

Clearly, the people of the Gold Coast voted to see the Liberal National Party continue in parliament with confidence from a sensible LNP business and tourism growth perspective—a perspective that is particularly important for the people of the Gold Coast and my electorate of Mermaid Beach as one of Australia's favourite holiday spots.

I would like to congratulate Lawrence Springborg, the newly elected leader of the LNP—he was at the time this speech was conceived—on his elevation. Safe and experienced hands are required to deliver a clearly alternative government. Lawrence delivers these attributes in spades. I have every confidence that Lawrence will be a stable and calming leader for the LNP, continuing to hold the inexperienced, bungling and clueless unionised Palaszczuk Labor government to account until the next election. We use the term 'Labor union government', as it is clear who is pulling the puppet strings with the rushed debate on industrial relations and obviously union demanded measures as the first big pay-off of the union orchestrated election campaign.

It is with that in mind that I support the amendment moved to the address-in-reply. This goes back a while. For members opposite who cannot remember six months ago, the member for Southern Downs moved an amendment to hold this government to account on the election promises made relating to debt and debt reduction. I remind members in the House of the amendment that was moved. We were asking for a quarterly report to be tabled on gross state debt and total debt repayments, ensuring gross debt will reduce each financial year. We were also asking for the publishing, prior to the next sitting day, of a formal definition, including minimum value, of what constitutes a state asset as it relates to Labor's 'no asset sales' pledge. We have now seen that 'no assets sales' pledge turn into a 'no major asset sales' pledge. That was not said before the election.

I support the amendment moved by the member for Southern Downs in total. I would like to see debt and debt reduction high on the agenda of this particular Labor government. In terms of the asset

sales pledge that they asserted, I heard from the member for Stafford about an asset sale of some five hectares down on The Spit—for sale direct to a developer. It is not even calling for an open tender process. That is the particular type of governance we will see from this Palaszczuk Labor government all the way through the 55th Parliament.

Secondly, I thank the constituents of Mermaid Beach who have once again put their faith in me to lobby the clueless state government on their behalf and entrusted me with bringing their voices strongly and loudly, as I have done for the previous nine years, to the House.

I also acknowledge the constituents who do not vote for me and reassure them that I will, as I have in the past, represent their concerns to parliament with as much effort as for those who voted for me.

Mr Bleijie: Chicken dance.

Mr STEVENS: They obviously loved it very much. I have a 13 per cent margin, as opposed to some other members who lost greater amounts.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr STEVENS: I am not referring to the former Attorney-General at all! None of these particular parliamentary efforts could happen without the support of my lovely wife, Ruth, and my family. I thank them wholeheartedly for being part of my *raison d'être* of partaking of the political world.

The 2015 campaign was a tough one, especially for my supporters and volunteers, whose hard work through the hot summer days and nights helped me retain my seat in parliament with a 13 per cent margin. Without their help my re-election would not have been possible. It is help that I never, ever take for granted. This of course extends to the wonderful electorate office staffers, who throughout the busy campaign were busy doing electorate office work and successfully held the fort. Many thanks to Lisa, Ashleigh, Katie and Victoria.

My final thankyou goes to the Liberal National Party, of course, who give me the opportunity to represent both the party, through my role as Leader of Opposition Business in the House, and the people as the member for Mermaid Beach. My LNP branch members are a tower of strength to my Mermaid Beach representation, and I thank each and every one of them for their ongoing support.

With such a tightly balanced parliament, the Palaszczuk Labor government has undoubtedly not received an unfettered mandate from the people of Queensland. While expectations are high when you receive a clear mandate, they are perhaps even higher without one. I and the people of Mermaid Beach will be watching the Steven Bradbury-esque Palaszczuk Labor government closely after the many successes in the previous LNP House in bringing safety, security and peace very noticeably to my electorate, Mermaid Beach, through the efforts of LNP government members.

An example is the VLAD laws introduced by the LNP in the 54th Parliament. They have been an unbridled success, with many of my constituents commenting how they felt reassured and safer within their own neighbourhoods and indeed their homes. I take this opportunity to again thank the hardworking former attorney-general, Mr Jarrod Bleijie, member for Kawana, and the former police minister, Mr Jack Dempsey, and the members who developed that legislation and put it into the parliament.

Many will remember the upwardly spiralling crime and bikie gang presence during the Beattie-Bligh era—a perfect example of Labor failure contrasting with Liberal National Party accomplishment. I rose in this House nine times to warn the Labor governments at the time of the growing problem of bikies out of control on the Gold Coast and I was ignored. They put in a horrible little law that had no effect and no teeth and was not enforced. Unfortunately, it was only when these strong laws were put in place that we actually addressed the issue.

Under the failed stewardship of the Beattie-Bligh Labor government, whose focus was everywhere but the Gold Coast, the bikie gang problem was excused with spin, bodgied-up crime figures and sloppy legislation, giving law-breakers a smack on the wrist and releasing them back into the community to reoffend and reoffend, exemplified by the bikie brawl at Broadbeach which had men, women and children cowering in the dining and entertainment precinct of one of the most popular family destinations of Australia's favourite playground.

In contrast, the secure, stable and capable LNP government instigated a decrease in crime levels through hard work and strong legislation, in conjunction with the Rapid Action Police Patrol, or RAPP as it is known. Legislation saw the social environment improve, particularly in the vital tourism sector, with customers and visitors returning to businesses without fear of violent, vengeful retaliation by members of criminal bikie gang organisations lurking around, threatening and intimidating innocent residents and visitors. It is the RAPP, run by experienced superintendent Jim Keogh, whose actions

have directly benefited the Gold Coast and which has been the main driver enforcing the legislation. Thank you, Jim. I am sorry that under the watch of this vengeful new police minister you have been recalled to Brisbane. I urge this inexperienced and union directed government to carefully consider all of the actions they may contemplate in reversing this successful legislation.

Additionally, and particularly within Mermaid Beach and indeed the Gold Coast, a return to the beautiful, peaceful and family-friendly vibe was also helped through the long-awaited introduction of the party house legislation. Indeed, I have stated on multiple occasions that the behaviour associated with those party houses was deplorable, offensive and unacceptable. Under previous state Labor governments, I tried and tried to have appropriate legislation introduced to outlaw the behaviour. But, again, the Labor government did not care about the Gold Coast and Mermaid Beach. These unruly, intoxicated and aggressive young people who have no inhibitions to act in a way that is totally unacceptable under society's standards, have impacted dramatically on people's lives and on residents of my electorate. During the previous Bligh Labor government the issue was ignored and hidden under the metaphorical 'they are all LNP members' rug, with all attempts by concerned Gold Coast residents to bring this matter to light, even suggestions of assistance by the Gold Coast City Council, being flatly rejected.

The Gold Coast's temporary local planning instrument outlawing these party houses could only be enacted with the support of the LNP party house legislation. These party houses have been impacting our residents for years and a solution in the best interests of suffering communities was needed—a solution that was delivered by a cooperative and proficient LNP government. On a personal note, several constituents have contacted me to relate how pleased they have been with the noticeable change to their neighbourhoods and the long-term leasing of several homes for normal residential living rather than the short-term party house letting—an obviously successful LNP driven outcome.

With the successes of the two abovementioned legislative changes for the Gold Coast by a sharing, caring LNP government comes a new challenge for the Gold Coast and the people of Mermaid Beach. The Coolangatta airport, owned privately by the Gold Coast Airport Pty Ltd, is proposing a foolish scheme to install the outdated instrument landing system technology and acquire a new flight path over prime tourism and residential real estate. I have previously risen in this House to advise the people of Queensland of the thoughtless attempt to sell this highly intrusive flight path as being necessary to avoid flight cancellations and aircraft diversions, and what a crock that is! The outdated technology is merely a spin tool for the Gold Coast Airport to acquire a new flight path and appeal to the outdated planes of Asian airlines with old technology incorporated into them. Only 13 diversions were recorded in 2014 out of 35,000 landings. While I fully support the tourism industry on the Gold Coast—indeed, more flights from Asia would increase our tourism numbers—I do not do so at the expense of destroying the peace and tranquillity of residential areas by burdening them with aircraft noise where none previously existed and where none is necessary.

Through my longstanding public service firstly to the Gold Coast city as a local councillor and secondly as a current state member, I can sincerely say that the implementation of this flight path would detrimentally affect our flourishing tourism industry and indeed the upcoming 2018 Commonwealth Games, in addition to the peaceful residential communities of Nobby Beach, Mermaid Beach, Broadbeach and Mermaid Waters. After speaking with many concerned residents, I hope that the federal government takes on board the many concerns that have been expressed to it. Indeed, the local federal member Mr Steven Ciobo, the member for Moncrieff, has lobbied hard to have the federal government reject this new flight path, as has the local councillor Paul Taylor and the Gold Coast City Council. This horrible intrusion into the Mermaid Beach area is not welcomed, not warranted and should not be part of our future airspace.

A special mention must go to the newest member on the Gold Coast, the member for Gaven, Sid Cramp. Sid did a great job—well done, Sid—winning the seat of Gaven. When I first met Sid, he was a hopeful preselection candidate in Gaven and it has been wonderful to see him now transition as the expert member for Gaven, and we certainly had some issues there over the past couple of terms. The Gold Coast is again seen as a sea of LNP blue—I love that: a sea of LNP blue—and I love swimming in that ocean!

I also want to extend my sincerest thanks and continued admiration to our former premier, Campbell Newman. Campbell came into power after more than a decade of Labor mismanagement and poor choices—turning around black holes of Labor ignorance such as the critically ill healthcare system and an ever-growing fiscal black hole, returning the great state of Queensland into a positive, growing economy with a health system that actually works and nurses who actually get paid on time and the correct amount. To Cam and your lovely wife, Lisa: Queensland and Mermaid Beach thank you for your wonderful contribution over a quickfire nearly three-year stint as premier and I wish you the very, very best for your future career.

In closing, the next three years are sure to be very interesting. I look forward to the challenge of supporting my fellow LNP members as the Leader of Opposition Business in this House and I am delighted to be re-elected to this House as the LNP member for Mermaid Beach. I will continue to represent the constituents of Mermaid Beach to the best of my abilities with all my passion in terms of issues that affect them. I encourage any Mermaid Beach electorate residents to seek out my office at any time for any issues or concerns that they may have.