




Speech By
Ros Bates

MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA

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ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (5.24 pm): It gives me great pleasure to rise once again as the member for Mudgeeraba in this House and to reflect on all that has been achieved in Mudgeeraba over the past six years and all that is to come over the next three. When I gave my first speech in this House just over six years ago, I told the residents of my electorate that my role would be to champion their local issues, and that that would be how I would spend my time as their member. I said that I would continue to fight on their behalf to ensure that their needs were loudly and effectively represented in this parliament.

As I stand here, having been re-elected for a third term as Mudgeeraba's representative, I can say proudly that I have been the strong local champion I set out to be. When I was elected in 2009, Mudgeeraba had been neglected and ignored for eight long years. Our roads and infrastructure were crumbling. Our schools were underfunded and had huge maintenance backlogs. Our police were under-resourced. Our community groups and sporting clubs were not receiving the funding they deserved.

With the support of local residents, I have worked to ensure our local area in 2015 is almost unrecognisable when compared to the state it was in six years ago. Our roads, once feared as dangerously unsafe by locals throughout the hinterland, have been improved exponentially with \$519 million in road upgrades since I was elected. The M1 has been widened and its interchanges upgraded all the way from exit 73 in Carrara to exit 82 at Robina. Residents of Mudgeeraba and the Gold Coast travelling through Mudgeeraba will no longer encounter what was dubbed by locals as the infamous 'Mudgeeraba car park'.

It would be remiss of me if I did not raise the ongoing upgrade of the motorway. To the new Minister for Main Roads, who might not have the corporate history that I do of the M1, I ask: will you work with the members from the Gold Coast to ensure that both the state and federal governments commit to the continuation of the motorway upgrade from exit 82 to exit 85? There is a reason, Minister, why I have been dubbed the member for the M1 by local media. My electorate effectively spans exits 73, 75, 79, 81, 82, 84, 85 and the tail end of exit 87. I campaigned vigorously on every section of this motorway and every interchange on this motorway well before I was elected. In fact, my very first political story in the *Gold Coast Bulletin* was holding up a sign with the slogan 'We need the M1 upgraded now' in 2005.

During the course of the previous government we utilised savings from the upgrade of exit 73 to exit 79 to continue a third southbound lane over the flood plain in Mudgeeraba. Preload work and purchase of land on the flood plain for the northern section to be widened has already been completed and funding of some \$9 million identified by TMR to continue this much needed upgrade.

In addition, I would like to see the further \$125 million required to continue the six laning of the motorway from Robina to Reedy Creek. Both sides of the House are well aware that the M1 is the artery of the Gold Coast and needs future funding from both Commonwealth and state coffers.

Beechmont Road has been widened and cliff faces have been scaled back in mammoth projects to the value of approximately \$11.4 million. However, there is more work to be done. The strong and effective hardworking community group, SOS Beechmont—otherwise known as the Better Roads for Beechmont group—had already identified dangerous sections of what was then dubbed RACQ's worst state controlled main road. With strong advocacy from me, we saw massive upgrades of Beechmont Road, which made travel safer for not only residents of my electorate in Lower Beechmont but also residents of my neighbouring colleague Jon Krause MP, the member for Beaudesert.

The Better Roads for Beechmont group has identified a further one-kilometre stretch of road between Elimbah Court and Jardine Street which remains the only narrow stretch of road that is so narrow it cannot be lined with centre line markings. This stretch has been the scene of many accidents, and seeing cars over the banks at the side of the road is a common occurrence. The member for Beaudesert and I are committed to the completion of this final section of Beechmont Road. We ask the minister to request costing models for this final section of the road such that Beechmont Road will never again be called the state's worst road. The minister should take a drive up to the Beechmont Plateau and view for himself what has been done and what is still to be done. He would then be able to see that line markings cannot be done on this section of the road as it is too narrow and the road needs widening, not painting.

Springbrook Road has seen \$3.5 million in upgrades which have seen many stretches upgraded and resurfaced and safety barriers installed at various sections to improve the safety of motorists. Current roadworks of over \$1.1 million are currently underway under the Black Spot Program—and I thank my federal colleague Scott Buchholz MP, the federal member for Wright, for taking the time to work with locals and me to identify this much needed safety upgrade. Sadly, just prior to the roadworks being announced we had a fatality on this very stretch of road, and I look forward to this section being completed shortly. I am informed by Main Roads that it should be completed by the end of this month.

This road is a heritage listed state road, and I would also hope that the new Minister for Main Roads continues with the blanket approval for road maintenance and general road repairs provided to TMR from the former minister for environment and heritage protection, my good friend Andrew Powell MP. This was put in place so that we never see roadworks stopped for months on this road with one call from a radical green in Springbrook which put lives in danger whilst Springbrook Road looked like the Kokoda Track.

Worongary Road has seen large-scale upgrades, totalling \$6.7 million, with a \$2.16 million upgrade to the Worongary Road floodway having been completed only a few weeks ago after an earlier \$2 million upgrade from Brixton Court to Uplands Court. Worongary, Tallai and Gilston residents will no longer be cut off in the event of flooding as they were in the past. Worongary Road has had the most dangerous sections of this road identified and constructed. This road is no longer a road of state significance on our state network. Advice from TMR concludes that this road should be demoted and handed over to the Gold Coast City Council, and I urge the new Minister for Main Roads to look into this matter and resolve this issue once and for all.

Nerang-Murwillumbah Road has been upgraded to the tune of \$3.4 million and includes many areas of resurfacing and the installation of guardrails and numerous repairs caused by rockslides and landslides to ensure that this vital area remains open for hinterland motorists. In areas like Reedy Creek, we have worked to reduce traffic congestion by investing \$2 million in overpass upgrades, upgrades to the Bridgman Drive intersection and \$400,000 to ease congestion on the Old Coach Road roundabout.

Reedy Creek congestion remains a concern and, whilst I have worked closely with my local councillor Daphne McDonald to open up council roads to alleviate congestion from the school traffic from our three Christian schools, more needs to be done. The Old Coach Road Connector study, which was completed in 2012, needs urgent funding to open up exit 87 and Old Coach Road and Tallebudgera Connection Road so that the 2,000 cars from the Observatory who wish to travel southbound can do so without traversing an overpass and five sets of traffic lights. Referred to as the Old Coach Road Connector, this link would help manage traffic growth on the western side of the motorway and enable some local traffic to avoid the motorway altogether.

The first phase of the Old Coach Road Connector includes the preservation of a suitable road corridor between Burleigh Interchange, exit 87, and Old Coach Road. A connection in this area would provide greater connectivity between the Pacific Motorway, Reedy Creek, West Burleigh, Old Burleigh Town and the surrounding areas. The connection would also provide a more direct route from Tallebudgera Valley along Old Coach Road which ultimately would require upgrading.

Given that the Deputy Premier has all but confirmed that the Boral quarry will go ahead under a Palaszczuk-Gordon government, I urge the Minister for Main Roads to reject Boral's—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Ryan): Order! Member for Mudgeeraba, the Speaker has had made a few rulings in respect of the proper title for members and the government. I ask you to correct that reference in your speech.

Ms BATES: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. The Boral quarry will go ahead under a Palaszczuk government. I urge the Minister for Main Roads to reject Boral's pitiful \$1 million upgrade—where they want to bring a truck a minute through my already congested roundabout—and ensure that Boral goes back to its original design promised at a community meeting in 2011 and pays for the upgrade of exit 87 so the trucks go that way. If Boral want the rock then the taxpayers of Queensland should not be paying for the road for their trucks to go on.

I stood at a local meeting with Jann Stuckey back in 2011. We were all shown these wonderful plans by Boral about how they were going to connect the Tallebudgera Connection Road to Old Burleigh Town and take all of their trucks that way—that way not one truck would go through Reedy Creek. In their submission to the Coordinator-General and subsequently the appeal that is happening in the Planning and Environment Court, they have short-changed Queensland taxpayers and the Queensland government, regardless of what colour you are. All they want to do is put in an 800-metre stretch of road that costs \$1 million that is going to further congest that roundabout. I urge the minister to not be duped by Boral's planning for these trucks.

Our children are now getting the schools and education they deserve, after I secured \$8.5 million in funding and better facilities for our local schools, as well as an additional \$2.8 million to help them get ready for the transition of year 7 into high school. The Great Results Guarantee, implemented by my colleague and friend the member for Surfers Paradise, John-Paul Langbroek MP, has seen autonomy given to local principals so that they can run their schools the way they need to and are not being directed from Brisbane on how best to utilise funds in their own local schools. Many of my local schools were poised to become independent public schools under an LNP government, and I implore the Minister for Education to continue allowing local principals to run their own local schools. This initiative is a win for any member of parliament, regardless of political persuasion, and was well received by principals, teachers and the P&Cs of all my local schools.

Mudgeeraba is now a safer place to raise a family, with more police on the beat and a new police helicopter for the Gold Coast. Working with police, we have taken a more proactive approach and have seen graffiti decrease by 75 per cent in Mudgeeraba, hooning being addressed, and break and enters down by 27 per cent, and we have seen the scourge of criminal motorcycle gangs shown the door on the Gold Coast. I put on record my thanks to one of the nicest men I know, the Hon. Jack Dempsey, former minister for police, and for all that he did for me personally and my electorate, and I wish him all the best in his recovery from cancer, which he kept to himself throughout the campaign. You are sorely missed, Jack.

Community and sporting groups in my electorate are now receiving more funding than ever before and have been able to rapidly expand since I have been the local member. I am the proud patron of 15 local sporting clubs in my electorate, and since 2009 these clubs have received over \$500,000 to improve their facilities and boost their membership numbers.

Mudgeeraba is a fantastic family orientated electorate and we have huge junior sporting clubs in the area, and many of these clubs have well over 500 members like the mighty Mudgeeraba Redbacks Junior Rugby League Club, the Carrara Saints Junior AFL Club, the Mudgeeraba-Nerang & Districts Cricket Club—the oldest cricket club on the Gold Coast—the mighty Bushmen and the Mudgeeraba Soccer Club. Funds from the Get in the Game programs have enabled them to expand their clubs with new funds for new facilities which would have been unavailable to them in the past. There are clubs which have gone from strength to strength with new management like the Magic United Football Club and the Mudgeeraba Tennis Club who can now boast an incredible increase in membership and who are community orientated and work with businesses to help their local clubs prosper.

Other clubs are fledgling and enthusiastic, such as the Robina Raptors Junior Rugby League Club and the Spartans Junior AFL Club, where funding continuation of Get in the Game programs gives them a great hand up to take their clubs forward and are well received. I have already spoken with the new Minister for Sport and appreciate his comments, and I again ask that this new government continues this program as it is such a winner for local families, sporting clubs and members of parliament alike.

I congratulate my colleague the former minister for sport and recreation, Steve Dickson, for championing this program. The Get in the Game vouchers for young families to enable their children to participate in sports are a winner. I also thank the former minister for recognising our tourism potential, with hinterland areas like Springbrook National Park receiving great new tourism boosts like

the Purling Brook Falls suspension bridge, fought for, funded and built by an LNP government. This bridge will serve as a significant drawcard for the local community to get more visitors to our fantastic region and have them explore our world famous walking tracks. It took an LNP government to deliver this important initiative which would never have occurred under a Labor government beholden to extreme greens in Springbrook.

I would also like to see the revocation of the oval from The Settlement at Springbrook so that locals can play a game of cricket on their oval without burdensome regulations. This was planned prior to the last election and I would ask the Minister for National Parks to revisit this proposal for residents in my very small town of Springbrook.

In the lead-up to the election I announced \$155,000 for tourism signage at the gateway to Springbrook at Wunburra Lookout to get visitors up the mountain so they could explore all that this magnificent region has to offer. This was an issue supported by the Chamber of Commerce and Tourism operators on the mountain. A review of all signage was done in conjunction with the Gold Coast City Council, and I ask the Minister for Tourism to revisit this proposal so that tourists do not just get to Wunburra Lookout, think that that is all Springbrook has to offer and then turn around and go back down to the Numinbah Valley.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Ryan): Order! Member for Lockyer, it is highly disorderly to be talking in the aisles. The member for Mudgeeraba has the call.

Ms BATES: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. Springbrook needs a statement entrance, and locals manning the volunteer information booth would welcome signage and information facilities in conjunction with the Gold Coast City Council. These are tangible, concrete ways that, with the support of local residents, I have been able to achieve great results for the Mudgeeraba electorate.

As we turn to the next three years, there is still much more to be done and many more ways we can make our local community even better. As we speak, a \$155,000 footpath on Gooding Drive in Merrimac has been built after I lobbied the Department of Transport and Main Roads on behalf of local residents since mid-2014. This is a win for local families with young children in pushers and residents in wheelchairs or who use walking frames as they now have a safe footpath to go from Merrimac to Worongary to do their shopping or take their kids to local childcare centres.

The \$1 billion shovel-ready Pacific View Estate in Worongary, after nine long years in the wilderness, has finally been approved under the call-in process initiated by my good friend the Hon. Jeff Seeney, former deputy premier, who had the foresight to call in this significant project which is much needed in my electorate. Without his stewardship of this project, it would still be wallowing in the never-never.

Mr Cripps: Which one was that?

Ms BATES: Pacific View Estate in Worongary. I will continually remind the government that this was an LNP led project to generate jobs on the Gold Coast and not theirs. In fact, their own failed Labor candidate in Mudgeeraba rallied against the project. She obviously missed the memo.

Prior to the election, I made a number of important commitments which will serve to enhance our local area even further. Whilst these initiatives would have been fully funded by an LNP government, I will now fight to see these projects realised from the opposition benches. I will fight to further enhance the safety of our local schoolchildren by seeing flashing school zone lights installed at Mudgeeraba Special School, Numinbah Valley State School, Mudgeeraba Creek State School and Merrimac State School. I ask that the minister give these important safety initiatives priority and that my electorate is not neglected for having voted convincingly for an LNP candidate.

I will fight to secure \$100,000 to clean up Mudgeeraba Creek from the M1 to Somerset Drive at Glenwood Park. I know that my friend Andrew Powell assured that that would go ahead whilst he was the minister. I call on the new Minister for Environment to do what his former Labor predecessors would not do and give this project the recognition it deserves. I have an army of locals under the stewardship of one of my local Landcare groups who will take up the cudgel and repair this much neglected area of Mudgeeraba Creek.

I will fight to deliver \$300,000 to stamp out hooning in the Gold Coast hinterland by installing CCTV cameras, lights and signage in the Numinbah Valley at known hooping spots. I am very pleased that the new Minister for Police also sees the very real concerns this issue has for local residents and schoolchildren. I will fight to ensure that the \$5 million the former LNP government committed to an upgrade of the dangerous and confusing Gooding Drive roundabout as part of preparations for the Commonwealth Games will be delivered for residents of Merrimac, Robina and Carrara. It will be my role to continue to loudly represent the interests of the Mudgeeraba electorate from the opposition benches.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the countless friends and supporters who helped me win Mudgeeraba so convincingly. My campaign team are dedicated, hardworking individuals who gave countless hours of their time over the weeks, months and years that I have known them, and it is with their tireless support that I am standing in the chamber today. To the over 200 volunteers who were on the ground on the day of the election, I thank you—volunteers like Brad Smith, Carl Schuetze, Richard Lennon, John and Margot Rylah, Dorothy Davis, Ann Yates, Sally Marshall, Di Grayson, Sarina Patane, Cherry and Ron Pia, Bryan Durham, Pat, Matt, Rhys and Xavier, and all the members of the Clarey family who were there every step of the way with their own unique sets of talents not only during the election campaign but well before it. To Barb Malcolm, a very special woman who many think is my mum because we look alike, I thank you for your support, love and scones. My loyal staff, Jacquie and Alex, have worked incredibly hard for the past three years to support me in my role as the member for Mudgeeraba, and I could not be more grateful for their support and dedication.

Life in politics can be very difficult, particularly for our families, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank Tracy Davis, Michael Hart, John-Paul Langbroek, Vaughan Johnson and Michael Crandon for the support they showed me and my family during very difficult times. To Tim Nicholls and Jeff Seeney, thank you for all the times you stood by me, for all the wrongs that you made right and for being my voice when I could not speak. Most importantly, I would not be standing here today without the support of my family—my three beautiful, honest, strong, gutsy children, Ben, Greg and Jill, and my sisters, Jos and Cath, who have endured so much over the past three years and who have always been there to support me through thick and thin. The next three years will no doubt entail more highs and lows, challenges and rewards, setbacks and achievements, but through it all I know that I can always count on my wonderful children and my sisters to keep me grounded and on track. Six years on, it gives me great pleasure to reaffirm the important commitment I made to my residents in 2009. I look forward to loudly representing my constituents in the 55th Parliament of Queensland.