




Speech By
Tim Mander

MEMBER FOR EVERTON

Record of Proceedings, 5 May 2015

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (2.56 pm): I rise to participate in the address-in-reply debate for the 55th Parliament. The first thing I want to do is thank the people of Everton for re-electing me as their local state member. Unfortunately, many of my colleagues who represented electorates bordering my own were not re-elected. I do want to thank the former members for Ferny Grove, Pine Rivers and Ashgrove for the teamwork that we exercised over the last three years and the incredible hard work that they put into their electorates. They are all quality men. I want to put on the record my appreciation of their efforts.

I thoroughly enjoyed my first term as the member for Everton. Having lived in the district all of my life, I think getting to know the residents even better has been a thoroughly rewarding experience. It has been particularly encouraging to see at close hand those individuals and organisations that give tirelessly to their communities. It is interesting that someone can live in a community all their life but it is not until they are in a position such as being a local member of parliament that they can really appreciate the hard work of the school P&Cs, the sporting clubs, the service organisations, the scout and girl guide groups, the local churches—all those people who volunteer and give their time to make our district a better place to live. It has been great getting to know them better. It is their aim and my aim to make the district of Everton the most liveable area in Queensland, and I think we are doing that fairly well.

When I reflect on my achievements in the electorate over the last three years, I feel a great deal of satisfaction. Looking at the schools in my area, we have had some wonderful achievements over the last three years. I think of my biggest secondary school, the Albany Creek State High School, and the fact that we now have a performing arts complex there, a \$7.5 million investment. This is something for which the school had been campaigning for many, many years and it is a school which has a proud record in the arts. I was delighted to be able to announce, through the former minister for education, John-Paul Langbroek, that funding. Now we have this wonderful facility, a facility that is used not only by the school, but also by the community. It is one that I am very proud to be associated with.

The other secondary high school that I have in my electorate is the Everton Park State High School.

Mr Elmes: A great school!

Mr MANDER: That is exactly right, it is a great school. The member for Noosa and Geoffrey Rush are 'old boys' from Everton Park State High School. By the way, member for Noosa, I think you are a better actor than Geoffrey Rush.

Everton Park State High School, as you may or may not be aware, was one of the schools that was, quite rightly, looked at for closure because it was under-utilised. A local campaign was begun to justify its ongoing existence, and I played a key role in helping them put a strategy together—not to simply kick up a storm and scream about it—to address the issues that had been identified by the

department. It was a great day when we announced that Everton Park State High School's future is assured, and I am still working with the school to see how we can fund its refurbishment. Part of the compromise that the community agreed to was to annex a slice of the school and to sell off an unused area, hopefully to a community organisation, and then use the proceeds of that sale for the long-overdue refurbishment of the school, and I will continue to fight for that.

In my electorate there was \$1.1 million given to schools under the Great Results Guarantee funding, as I mentioned in the last sitting of parliament. This was a fantastic initiative of the previous minister where funding was given directly to school principals under the proviso that they met minimal levels for numeracy and literacy, and they have embraced that with great glee. There was \$610,000 that was allocated for the school maintenance backlog in my electorate, which was part of the \$300 million that we devoted to that particular task. Eight schools in my electorate had flashing crossing lights installed and 40-kilometre-per-hour school zones, which has provided a safer environment for our kids as they go to school. That was a wonderful initiative that we rolled out right across the state. I am very lucky to have the Bunyaville Conservation Park in my electorate. We invested a further \$500,000 in the Bunyaville education centre, which means that kids from all over Brisbane—particularly the north side—can visit that education centre to learn more about the environment and the bush.

In the transport and main roads area, Old Northern Road—one of those major thoroughfares from the north into the city—is still in the process of being resealed. That road was littered with potholes, and it has been great to see that resealing being completed. We are also in the process of installing noise barriers along a section of that road where for years residents have had to put up with the increased traffic noise that has been generated. We are in the process of delivering that right at this moment. In the transport area, trains are now running every 15 minutes on the Ferny Grove line. That has been very popular, and now it is great because you do not need timetables. If you just turn up at a local station, whether it is Grovely or Oxford Park or Mitchelton, you know that a train is going to come within the next 15 minutes. That has been very well received as well.

Another good thing that happened in this area was the rebuilding of a pedestrian bridge across one of the local creeks in my area, Kedron Brook. That bridge was destroyed year after year, flood after flood. In the past it was repaired and, of course, destroyed again at the next flood event. Along with the Moreton Bay Regional Council we invested some money there, and we now have a wonderful pedestrian bridge which has survived a couple of flood events since it has been erected.

My electorate also benefitted from the reduction in public transport fees—probably for the first time ever—which occurred at the beginning of this year, and that has been well received by working families. We were able to deliver some wonderful initiatives in my community, even if I do say so myself. I am very proud of the Youngcare development that hopefully will be underway in my electorate at Albany Creek. It was committed to and we are still waiting to see the first sod turned.

Mrs O'Rourke interjected.

Mr MANDER: I will take that interjection from the minister. If you do not deliver on this one, remember the old adage 'hell will have no fury.' The Youngcare facility will be on a beautiful block on a main road—just the perfect position for these people who need 24-hour care. I will make sure that we keep the minister accountable for that particular development. Another development in my area is called the Nest. The Nest is what I am calling the female version of the Men's Shed. This facility is for women of all ages to come together and create networks with an emphasis on domestic violence and to let people know that there is a safe place they can go. I managed to secure at least 12 months funding for a beautiful old heritage home on South Pine Road. The funding for that has just been delivered in the last couple of weeks, and I am hoping that this might be a prototype that we can roll out across the state so that women have a place where they can feel safe and supported by other women.

In the Mitchelton area we have entered into a partnership—with the help of the former minister for communities, the member for Aspley—to provide a facility for people with mental health issues. That is currently under construction, and I am very proud to have that in my electorate as well. Through my position as the minister for housing and public works, I was able to give a grant of \$100,000 to the North West Youth Accommodation Service to try and prevent young people from becoming homeless in the first place. They are about halfway through that funding, and that was very well received.

My electorate was also a recipient of the Get in the Game funding which took place right across the state. That was a wonderful initiative by the former minister. It is incredibly important that we get our kids active and healthy. I forget the statistics, but I think it was something like 28 per cent of kids—

Mr Dickson: It was 38 per cent.

Mr MANDER: Thank you to the member for Buderim for that interjection. Thirty-eight per cent of the kids who took advantage of this funding were involved with organised sport for the first time, which is absolutely fantastic; \$600,000 went to sporting clubs in my electorate, and hundreds of kids took advantage of those \$150 vouchers.

There is still more work to be done in my electorate. One of the really important things is the intersection at South Pine Road and Stafford Road where my great big billboard is. Whenever you go past there you will see me looking over that intersection with a bit of a smile. A Woolworths and Masters development will be opening up there in the next couple of weeks, and the intersection is a bottleneck that really needs to be totally overhauled. I will continue to fight for upgrade funding for that intersection so that traffic can flow along there far better than it does at the moment.

I want to thank the staff who have served me incredibly loyally over the last three years. To my electorate staff Maddi, April and Peter—April is still with me—I really appreciate the service that they give to the community; to my ministerial staff Matt Tapsall, Matt Hulett, Marty Kennedy, Liam Mooreshead, Anna Radich, Jordan Kitts, Sarah Feeney and Sandy Landers, I thank them for their unbelievable service; to my former staff Lisa Palu, Taryn Davey and Nathan Tunney, who are all incredibly efficient, I will always be grateful for the support that they gave me.

I want to acknowledge the volunteers in my electorate who helped me in my re-election campaign. I mention Matt and Katy Constance and their kids, Tiana and Tyler. I mention Bruce Hooker, who prided himself on being at his spot at four in the morning every Saturday and then texting me at the time to tell me that he was there. Thanks for that, Bruce. I really appreciated that. Of course, I have already mentioned the great work Sandy Landers did as a volunteer to head up my re-election campaign. I thank all of the volunteers who were involved with letterbox dropping, roadsides, polling booths, sign sites and donors. I appreciate your support.

Of course, I thank my family. I thank my four children, who have been roped into this lifestyle: Danielle, Claudette, Zachary and Miriam. My daughter-in-law, Sarah, and my son-in-law, Mark, have also been roped in. Thanks for your support and hard work. Of course, last but not least I thank my darling wife, Gayle, to whom I have been married for 32 years, for her ongoing and undying support.

I was very honoured in the last parliament to be the minister for housing and public works. I am very proud of what we achieved. I mentioned some of this in the last sitting of parliament but I want to mention some of those things again. I mention the outsourcing of the management of public housing to the community housing sector, a sector that we believe is better positioned to take on that task as it is far more holistic. I look forward to seeing that continued rollout of the outsourcing of the management of public housing. I am very proud of the reduction in the public housing waiting list—a nearly 50 per cent reduction. I hope that record remains and we can see further reductions.

I am very proud to have brought in fair and equitable rental rates in the public housing sector. Previously, some people were paying only eight per cent of their income towards rent which I think was totally unfair. I am very proud of the fact that we have tried to make it fairer again for those who are trying to get into public housing by bringing in a fair-leave policy so that we do not have public housing properties vacant for months and months on end. Again, I think that is only fair. The other thing I am particularly proud about in public housing is that we wanted to make sure that people in public housing appreciate the fact that it is a privilege and they need to respect their neighbours and their property and if they do not then they need to wear the consequences of that. Our three-strikes policy has been very well received right across the state.

In this new parliament I do have the honour of being the shadow minister for education and training. My aim here is to ensure the maintenance of the legacy of our previous government and some of those policies which I have already mentioned: Great Teachers = Great Results, the Great Results Guarantee and independent public schools. I have four independent public schools in my electorate; there are 120 in the state. With the help of the federal government—hopefully the minister will accept that funding—that will go out to 250 schools. The schools have really embraced the independence and autonomy they have. I know that the school communities have as well. I think that is something that we need to make sure continues into the future.

I also want to make sure the minister in this area does some forward planning. One of the great things our government did was look not just three, four or five years ahead but 10, 20 and 30 years ahead. The Queensland Schools Planning Commission that Mr Langbroek put together when he was the minister looked at the future and looked at where we needed to put schools in future growth areas. I will be calling on the minister to make sure we do have that forward planning and that we do have the appropriate funding, to make sure that our schoolchildren right across the state have the

very best facilities and have a school in their area and do not have to travel too far to receive education. Some good things have happened in that area.

Again, we are waiting for the minister to move on some of the policies of the previous government. I mention the sale of Fortitude Valley school. There is \$50 million waiting to be used on future investment in school infrastructure. That school is just sitting there at the moment doing nothing. I hope that some decision would be made about that in the very near future.

Training is also included in this portfolio space. I am very concerned about some of the things I have heard already about this area. The other day I attended a private RTO conference at which the minister spoke. She talked about the fact that the Queensland Training Assets Management Authority would be reversed. That is quite unbelievable. The cost to reverse this will be incredible. It made sense to us to make sure that those who have expertise in delivering education—that is, the TAFE system and the private RTOs—go about doing that job while those who have expertise in using the assets more wisely than they are being used at the moment should be delivering that. That is what would have happened under our government. Now it sounds like all the assets are going back to the education department. Really, their expertise is not in looking after assets but in delivering education. We have seen that already, with TAFE colleges across the state being used only 40 per cent of the time. We see waste in the use of assets. Only members on this side of the parliament understand the ramifications of things like that, to make sure we get the best use of our assets.

In closing, it is quite obvious—it has been said by many of my colleagues—that the new government is a government that has stumbled into power. It has absolutely no plan whatsoever. It has no substance and absolutely no idea. It is beholden to the unions. The member for Mirani just proved that particular point.

Mr Bleijie: They are the unions.

Mr MANDER: I take that interjection. They are beholden to the unions. We have already seen how that will affect business confidence. We will see that they will not be able to help themselves: they will continue to bring about upheaval and we will continue to see an erosion of confidence. Unfortunately, our state will be the worse for it.