




Speech By
Hon. Yvette D'Ath

MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

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ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (9.17 pm): It is my absolute pleasure to rise to deliver my speech on the address-in-reply as the member for Redcliffe. I know every member stands here and says it but I certainly am grateful to have such an amazing electorate, being the electorate of Redcliffe. The electorate is made up of the suburbs of Clontarf, Woody Point, Margate, Kippa-Ring, Redcliffe, Scarborough, Newport and, of course, Moreton Island.

Of course, the electorate is not just made up of suburbs; it is made up of people and a community—a community that is extremely generous and is known for its amazing volunteers and, as a community, when things get tough people pull together and support their neighbours. That does not mean that we do not have our challenges. Redcliffe is certainly not unique there. We know that we have our struggles. We have high youth unemployment—around 18 per cent. We have just had a debate on domestic violence legislation again in this House, and we know that unfortunately Redcliffe is also experiencing a significant increase in the number of domestic and family violence applications coming into our local courthouse. That is all the more reason why we as a community need to pull together and support each other. It is certainly why the Palaszczuk government has taken the actions it has since coming into government at the start of this year to implement a range of initiatives to support our communities.

When I talk about my community, I want to talk about some of the amazing events and organisations within my electorate. This year we again saw amazing sporting events. The Murri Rugby League Carnival came back to Redcliffe this year. It started down the coast, it then went to Ipswich, it came to Redcliffe last year as part of the Arthur Beetson Foundation and it came back again this year. I am really hoping they will call Redcliffe home permanently now. It is an amazing carnival that brings Indigenous adults and youth together to play Rugby League over a number of days. What is great about this particular event is that for the participants to be allowed to be involved they all have to go through a health check, and the youth are not allowed to play unless they have had I think 90 per cent attendance at school for the previous three months. I think that is fantastic, but I have said that I would like to see that three months extended a bit longer to encourage those young people to value staying at school and understand the value of being at school.

This year alone they picked up a number of health related issues, including heart conditions, simply from those health checks. Through this event and the Deadly Choices campaign, an incredible number of Indigenous people are now doing health checks. It has significantly increased and it is such a worthy campaign. I want to thank everyone involved in the Murri Rugby League Carnival, the Arthur Beetson Foundation and Deadly Choices. I see those Deadly Choices shirts all over the Redcliffe peninsula and I see them in the youth detention centres, because we know we have a high proportion of Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander youths there. You cannot just go and buy one of those shirts; they have got to be earned—and that is what is great about this program. If you are wearing a Deadly Choices shirt, you know you have earned it and that is fantastic.

I also want to acknowledge what was previously called the Our Village Foundation and what is now known as MBRIT, Moreton Bay Region Industry and Tourism, which has been established through Shane Newcombe and his team. This organisation is working across the Moreton Bay region with the Moreton Bay Regional Council and all levels of government to increase our tourism, to support businesses and to grow our local economy. They do this through a whole range of initiatives and looking at investments and infrastructure in the community. They also put on amazing events. I know that you, Mr Deputy Speaker Ryan, are well aware of the fantastic events that MBRIT have been putting on in the Moreton Bay region.

Just this year, we had the Redcliffe Festival which brought tens of thousands of people to the Redcliffe peninsula. The Redcliffe Festival used to be known as the Redcliffe KiteFest and it was held over two days—the Saturday and Sunday—but now the Redcliffe Festival stretches over two full weeks and three weekends with the Redcliffe KiteFest, the Scarborough Sounds and the Jetty Fiesta. It is an amazing event and, as I said, it brings in tens of thousands of people from all across Brisbane and interstate. They stay and they spend money in our local community and that is all good for local business. So I want to congratulate MBRIT, Shane Newcombe and his team for the great work and investment they are making in our local communities.

The Moreton Bay Rail Link is well underway. I am extremely proud of this program. I lobbied very hard as the federal member to get over \$1 billion. We had funding from the council, the state government and the federal government all coming together to make this a reality. That commitment was made back in 2010. I am bemused at times when I read the social media from certain people claiming that it was other political parties and other governments which made this happen—that I simply advocated for it but they are the ones who delivered it. I can assure everyone in this House that it was federal Labor funding, it was state Labor funding and it was funding through Moreton Bay Regional Council which saw this become a reality. We are the ones who signed the contract with Thiess. We are the ones who made this happen. Next year we will see the opening of that 12.6 kilometre dual track with six stations. That rail line has been promised for over 100 years and it will finally come to the Redcliffe peninsula. It will be a boom for our local area, it will increase housing values, it will support local businesses and it will certainly provide great opportunities for our school students as well.

What is great about this rail line is that a lot of thought has gone into planning it. It is not just the train stations, the track and how many cars it gets off the road; it is also the fact that the entire 12.6 kilometres from the Petrie station all the way through to Kippa-Ring has a cycle and walking track alongside it. I already have parents saying, 'My kids don't even have to use the train. They are going to be able to ride their bike all the way from home to school on this safe walking track without going on Anzac Avenue anymore and dealing with the traffic.' So we are making it safer for cyclists as well as pedestrians and public transport users.

I want to acknowledge our amazing schools. I have to give a big shout out to our F1 students. The F1 racing car competition happens throughout Queensland and across the country every year. Incredibly, four young girls in year 12 at Redcliffe State High School who were studying engineering, mathematics, science—all our STEM subjects—

Ms Jones: Hear, hear! That's very good to hear.

Mrs D'ATH: The Minister for Education will be very pleased to hear about this. These amazing young ladies won the states, they went on to the nationals and ended up winning the nationals and then they went on to compete at the world competition in Singapore this year. These were four year 12 girls and the only all-girls team from Australia. These girls had an amazing time and they did very well in the competition.

One of these young ladies is one of only 11 students from across the world who were chosen to do a cadetship with the F1 Williams Racing Academy. She is going to spend the next few years going through training, programs and assessment. Of these 11 students, certain ones will drop off as they go along—those who are not achieving as much—and at the end of the day, when all of this is finished, the one student who is still standing will be offered a permanent job with the F1 racing team. I congratulate these amazing girls—Freya, you are incredible and we are all so proud of you. It is just terrific. This is one of those things—whether it is the F1 racing competition or the Lego robotics with the aviation and aeroskills courses in our high schools—that is catching kids' imagination and getting them into those STEM subjects. That is what we really need. I congratulate all of the organisations that are involved in those things.

We have the artificial reef that has been named after the late Bill Turner which is off Scarborough. It is wonderful to see this artificial reef in place and I know the recreational fishers are loving it.

I was very pleased to advocate on behalf of my local seniors who live at the Azure Blue retirement village. There is a new shopping strip across the road and they were struggling to cross the road safely.

One woman took a fall and broke a bone. We had a chat with Main Roads last year to find out what we could do about this and they were great. They came out and assessed it, and they have put in a safety island. The seniors can now cross Anzac Avenue very safely because of this new pedestrian safety island. I will come back to talking about departments shortly but Main Roads were terrific there.

I want to acknowledge the amazing community groups, and I cannot mention all of them—the Lions, the Lioness Club, the Rotary groups, Zonta, Quota, Breakaway, Cascade Place, ROPE, Chameleon House, Circle and the CWA. All of our amazing groups do such a tremendous job supporting our local community. I want to acknowledge all of my support team and my staff—Jenny, Karl and Eddie who are working with me. Jenny has been with me for a long time and she is absolutely incredible. We all know that you cannot do your job as a local member without great staff, and they are an incredible team.

I also want to mention Laura Gowdie, who has been by my side for so many years. Although she is no longer with me, she is in a much better job now working for another minister. This is a person to whom I owe so much. She has always been a huge supporter of mine. I am her biggest fan. I think she is amazing and I thank her for all of the great work she has done in my electorate office over the years and with my campaigns.

I am not going to try to name everyone who helped out on the campaign because it is all too difficult and the list is way too long. I say thank you to everyone who doorknocked and who stood out in the heat in January. It was a very hot campaign, as we all know, being in the middle of summer. They were incredible, out there every day at the street stall, standing on the side of the road with me from 5.30 in the morning and out there every afternoon. There were sausage sizzles, other things that we did and the markets on Sundays. There was the kind person who walked past with a big watermelon. I said, 'Oh gee, that looks great. I wouldn't mind some of that.' He came back an hour later with his children. They had cut it all up and put it on plates for us to support us with the campaign. They are incredible people. I thank them so much for their tireless work.

I do have to talk about last year, 2014, and what it has been like since the election. It was a tough year. Last week I celebrated eight years since I was first elected in the federal parliament, and those eight years have gone very quickly and a lot has happened. I have to say that last year was the most difficult for me as an elected representative. The reason is not that I was sitting in opposition—and this is important for me to raise because I think we all need to remember why we are here and learn from our past. It was a shocking year because I have never seen a government treat an elected representative in the way I was treated last year. It was absolutely disgusting to hear the sorts of responses I got from ministers on the other side when I was seeking information as a sitting member of parliament on behalf of my constituents and groups: the dismissive emails, the utter contempt that was shown to me last year, the absolute fear from government departments and public servants who were not allowed to talk to me. They made it very clear they were not allowed to talk to me. They had very clear directions that they were not allowed to talk to me in my own electorate as an elected member of parliament. They feared for their jobs. They would talk to me in whispers in corners to tell me what was going on. They feared for their jobs. No public servant should fear for their jobs simply because they are doing their job and talking to an elected member of parliament. It was absolutely disgusting. I raise this because no matter who is in government, honourable members have to remember these things and they have to think about how they treat people every single day.

After this election and we came in here and all the new members were sworn in, it put a huge smile on my face to watch people cross over and congratulate each other after their maiden speech. That is what I was used to seeing. That is what happened after every election in federal parliament: we would cross over to the other side, shake their hand and say, 'Good speech, well done, congratulations.' When I made my speech last year, not one person in this entire chamber moved to come over and say, 'Well done, Yvette, welcome.' It was absolutely astounding. I have never seen such arrogance and contempt for people who have been elected to represent their community. I raise this just so that we can learn to be more respectful.

Today we have been having debates about respect, domestic violence, equality and everything else. We have to respect each other across this chamber. I said last year in my maiden speech that we need to try to be parliamentarians, not politicians, and I stand by that comment. We have to show respect for each other. I am glad that I have definitely seen a change in this chamber this year. The most common question I was asked last year is, 'What's the difference between federal and state parliament?' The sad thing is I had to say: the conduct in this chamber. I had to say that. It was astounding. I spent six years of everyone going, 'Gee, you federal politicians. In question time you act like kids. It's appalling.' I can say that the federal parliament was the height of professionalism compared to what I saw here last year. It was appalling. It was disgusting. It was embarrassing. There are kids in the gallery who watch this. We have to learn. We have to look at our behaviour. We are role models;

whether we want to be or not, we are role models. We are elected representatives and we should look at how we behave and how we treat each other.

I did not intend to spend that long on that issue, but I felt it was important to make those points. I am so proud of my community. I want to take the last couple of minutes, firstly, to say thank you to my family because none of us can ever be here without the support of our families. To my husband and children, I say I will definitely spend some time with you over Christmas; I promise. They are my amazing support and I could not do what I do without them and I would not want to. It is because of them that I do this. To the Premier I say thank you for putting your faith in me, for appointing me as the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills. Thank you very much. I have loved every minute of doing this job this year. It is such an honour. I believe we have achieved so much already in the justice system and in Training and Skills in such a short period of time. We have a lot more to do, but I am just so proud of all the work we have already done, including what we did here today with civil partnerships. I am so proud of it.

Of course, all of us on both sides need to remember why we are here in government and that was the attacks we saw on public servants, on jobs, on so many people, the communities, the legal profession and the doctors. I will never forget it. I will never forget those who came out and supported me in the Redcliffe by-election. I will never forget those who came out and supported me this year. Every day that I am here I get up to make a difference. I will continue to do so. We are all here to create a legacy and leave behind a better place than when we came to it. That is certainly my objective. I look forward to spending every day as the elected member for Redcliffe doing just that.