




Speech By  
**Bruce Saunders**

**MEMBER FOR MARYBOROUGH**

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**ADDRESS-IN-REPLY**

 **Mr SAUNDERS** (Maryborough—ALP) (5.17 pm): It is a great pleasure to stand here and represent the people of Maryborough, after being re-elected with one of the largest increases in primary votes in this state and having also increased my two-party preferred vote. I would like to put it down to not only the great work of the Palaszczuk government ministers who have led Queensland so successfully for the last three years but also the great people I have in the Maryborough ALP branch and my supporters. They used to be called the 'Saunders Soldiers', but the member for Stafford came up and called them 'Bruce's Battalion'. To the 200-odd volunteers who worked on my campaign, I would like to say thank you. I will just mention a few before I get into the achievements of this great Palaszczuk government that delivered so much for the Maryborough electorate in the last three years.

I would like to thank my office staff, Paul and Ron. I have known Paul for close to 39 years. We have been great mates and he runs my office along with Ron. Ron is a fantastic office manager. He is a former SAS soldier and a great bloke. They are two caring men. I know it is hard to imagine middle-aged men who are very caring for their community and want to see their communities grow. One thing they are very passionate about is the Maryborough electorate.

I also want to mention the ALP branch in Maryborough. It is the oldest branch in Queensland and it used to be called the Australian Workers' League. When the Australian Labor Party was founded, the members moved across to the Australian Labor Party. It is 126 years old and is a fantastic branch with great people. We have grown that branch tremendously. They are good, honest people who work hard for their communities. We have formed another branch since I was elected; it is the Burrum district. For the people who do not know, the Burrum district is one of the mining districts of Queensland—Torbanlea and Howard. It is rich with the history of working-class people. The second Labor Prime Minister—

**Mr Power:** Fisher.

**Mr SAUNDERS:** I take the interjection from the member for Logan because it was Andrew Fisher. He was the second Labor Prime Minister of this country and he represented Wide Bay. He had an office in Gympie and he lived in Howard. Of course, his house stands in Howard as a monument to the Labor values of that era and also the current era.

There are so many people I would like to thank from my campaign who helped achieve that marvellous 21 per cent swing on the primary vote. I will start, first of all, with the government. I would like to thank the Premier. The Premier was magnificent in the campaign not only for what she has delivered but also what the cabinet has delivered over three years for the Maryborough electorate. Thanks to the member for Miller they call me 'bitumen Bruce' now, so I would like to take people on a bit of a drive through the electorate if the Deputy Speaker will allow me a little bit of leeway.

We will head out of Maryborough on the Hervey Bay road. There is a school called St Helens. This was a problematic school. That school has grown in size from about 200 students to about 440 students. There are a good principal, a good teaching cohort and great parents there. There was a need for traffic lights at the school as it was a nightmare for parents, grandparents and teachers exiting and

entering the school grounds off the Hervey Bay road. After the member for Miller came and looked—we stood there one day observing the traffic—and he saw the problems, traffic lights were installed as well as a brand-new car park. That was the first achievement, which could not be achieved under previous members for Maryborough. We achieved that thanks to the member for Miller.

Then if we drive a bit further down we come to the Urraween Road and Maryborough road intersection. Although it is not in the Maryborough electorate—it is in the electorate of Hervey Bay—a lot of my constituents use that intersection. It was regarded as one of the most dangerous intersections in Queensland. I think the day the minister and member for Miller and I were viewing the intersection there had been a car accident that morning. Who came to the rescue again? The Palaszczuk Labor government! An amount of \$40 million was put into that intersection. Now when people drive into Hervey Bay it is great and there has not been an accident. Because of the Hervey Bay Hospital and the medical precinct there, this intersection was used by ambulances and a lot of people and now it has been made safe.

Then we move on to the Yarrilee school intersection. It has received a \$26 million upgrade with great work from TMR. They are replacing all the pipes. It is a flood prone area and it is in wallum country. It is a massive job to do this. Once again, the Palaszczuk government delivered the \$26 million to upgrade that intersection.

The Pialba Burrum Heads Road was a bit of a dangerous road. An audit has been conducted and numerous road upgrades have been done. One was at the intersection heading into Toogoom, which was also a very dangerous intersection. With the money, once again from the Palaszczuk Labor government, that intersection was upgraded.

Then we move on to Burrum Heads. If anybody has ever been there they will know it is an absolutely beautiful place. I would like to say g'day to all the people at Burrum Heads today. I know a few are watching this speech. We put in the new boat ramp. This is a top-class facility, delivered again by the Palaszczuk Labor government. This has really put Burrum Heads on the map. It has gone from a sleepy little village to one where the shops on Saturdays and Sundays are going well and tourists are visiting. It is a thriving community. The previous boat ramp was very dangerous. It was called the Ross Street boat ramp. We were just waiting for someone to get killed there. Fortunately, that did not happen, and the new boat ramp is superb. Once again I would like to thank the minister for coming, as well as the former environment minister, who helped get the new boat ramp in the Great Sandy Straits.

We leave Burrum Heads and we head towards Howard and Torbanlea. Just outside the Torbanlea school there was a causeway which has caused problems for as long as I can remember. It was promised under the Newman government but was not delivered. It was promised but was not funded. Not only was it promised under the Palaszczuk Labor government but it was also funded, delivered in record time and under budget. That is making the lives of the children at Torbanlea school and the residents in the surrounding area much safer because they do not have to go through floodwater to get to school or back home to Torbanlea.

Then we move to Torbanlea school, and what a great school it is, too. There is a good principal and a good teaching cohort there. We have delivered there—under the former education minister we are delivering a new sports hall at the Torbanlea State School, which will upgrade the facilities there. That school has grown from around 230 students to about 440 students. This hall is needed. I could not believe that this school is on a B-double route and there were no flashing lights. We have put in flashing lights and other upgrades were also done to the school.

Then we drive down to Howard. Howard is a great community. As I said, it is an old mining town in the centre of the Burrum district. When I was elected in 2015 I found out that the Howard Police Station was going to close under those opposite. This police station was built in 1893. With the growing population in the Burrum district—Howard, Torbanlea, Burrum Heads, Craignish and Dundowran—we could not let that happen. Once again, the Palaszczuk Labor government came forward with a new \$10 million facility incorporating a brand-new fire facility. We will have an auxiliary fire station, a rural fire station—so red and green and yellow trucks—on the premises, as well as a state-of-the-art police station. That is happening there.

The LNP and the opposition have a lot of former police officers as members. We also have a former officer in the member for Macalister. When officers are sent out in dangerous conditions without the right equipment and then return to an outdated station—sometimes the internet would drop out; it was built in 1893 and had very cramped conditions—it is not conducive to modern policing. We cannot wait for that to open. A couple of weeks ago the member for Springwood came and visited the police station. This police station will be one of the best police stations anyone could ever see in regional Queensland. It is an achievement of the Palaszczuk Labor government, which is putting money and services back into regional Queensland. That is what we fought for in 2015.

When I stood for election and won the seat, I said I would put the Maryborough electorate first, and that is what this Palaszczuk Labor government has done. It is putting first not only Maryborough city but also the outskirts of the city and the smaller towns like Howard and Torbanlea et cetera. That police station will open later this year, and we are going to increase its size. We are also going to give the police there a second car. That is another commitment from the Palaszczuk Labor government, so not only will they have a great facility to work out of but they will also be better able to do their job with the use of a second police car.

Then we go along the Bruce Highway and back into Maryborough. The roadworks that have occurred on the Bruce Highway in conjunction with the federal government—we have put in our share of money—are second to none. Maryborough is a fantastic city to live in. It was brought to its knees from 2012 to 2015 by those opposite. I can say that it is off its knees now. Maryborough is standing tall. It has its mojo back.

The first thing we look at in Maryborough is Downer Infrastructure in relation to the trains. The contracts that have come through from the Palaszczuk Labor government have absolutely kept this facility alive. This facility was going to close. We make no mistake about that. The Palaszczuk government has kept this facility alive and has ensured that there is a pipeline of work for the next 12 years so that the men and women who work at this Downer Infrastructure facility know they have secure employment for the next 10 to 12 years. That is a great thing.

Then we look at the Maryborough Base Hospital, which had been severely neglected under those opposite. A \$10.4 million upgrade to the A&E is coming. When that work is finished later next year we will have a top class A&E for future years. It is a massive project which is extending the hospital by 7.5 metres.

Then we look at the schools. I have a bit of a soft spot for Maryborough State High School because the legendary TJ Ryan taught at Maryborough high. Honourable members might have noticed that Maryborough has a very strong Labor record over many years. TJ Ryan taught there when it was the Maryborough grammar school. The Palaszczuk Labor government is putting \$10.4 million into the school, plus a \$4.5 million performance arts hall.

With the addition of the Works for Queensland money, the CBD of Maryborough has been lifted. There are footpaths being constructed, including footpaths from nursing homes. This is work that the Fraser Coast Regional Council did not have the finance to do, but the Works for Queensland money has really lifted the Maryborough CBD and other areas. The money for that as well as the skate park for the children was provided by the Palaszczuk Labor government. The upgrade to the skate park in Maryborough city has created a fantastic skate park.

Duncan Chapman, about whom I spoke during the last sitting week, was the first man to step onto Gallipoli. Who is the biggest contributor to the World War I and Duncan Chapman memorial? The Palaszczuk Labor government once again. The Fraser Coast council and the federal government also came on board, but the No. 1 contributor is the Palaszczuk Labor government. In Maryborough that is the difference between the Campbell Newman era and the Palaszczuk Labor government era. As I said, Maryborough is standing proud now. It has its mojo back.

The main income for Maryborough city is from the Downer Group, where the best trains in the world are built. The workers down there are great tradesmen and good craftsmen, and they definitely produce great trains. We also have Hyne Timber, which is a fantastic timber mill. They employ a lot of people. It is no secret in the Maryborough electorate that I very strongly support my timber industry, which supports over 1,500 jobs indirectly and directly. Maryborough Sugar Factory, MSF, is also a great contributor to the Maryborough economy. They are the things that have happened in the last three years, but there is more to come. When you look at what we have done in the Maryborough electorate with education, roads, hospitals and sporting facilities, we have delivered, as a Labor government traditionally does, for people throughout regional Queensland.

It is an honour to represent the hardworking people of the Maryborough electorate. I would like to thank a few more people who made sure that the Palaszczuk government was re-elected and that we have a majority in this House so that we can continue with our great program of reform and returning front-line services to regional Queensland which we began over the past 2½ to three years. I would like to thank my wife, who had a terrible time during the campaign. It was one of the worst campaigns I have ever been in. I have never seen a campaign like the 2017 campaign. I have been in politics since I was eight years old. We have to stop the politics of hate, because when your wife is spat on during a campaign it is not a very good thing. I think that is why the public are getting sick of politicians. When they saw what happened in the 2017 election in Maryborough the public were disgusted, and I think it is time that we all look at ourselves and make sure that we lift the standard of campaigns and make sure that families do not get involved.

I would like to thank my two wonderful daughters. My younger daughter is a union organiser for Together. As we say in my family, I bleed purple. My youngest daughter, of whom I am very proud, is an organiser for Public Service sector workers in the Central Queensland district. My other daughter works in Brisbane in HR, and they came up and worked in my campaign. My best friend in the world is a man who, as I said in my maiden speech, although he is not my blood brother, is very, very close. He is he an old western boy who ran for the seat of Gregory in 1989, but he was beaten by Vaughan Johnson. We are great mates—

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Mr SAUNDERS:** I thank the honourable member for saying that my mate is a wonderful man. Thank you very much, because Jim Nilon is a wonderful man and I could not run a campaign without Jim and all of my volunteers. I would also like to thank the Together union and Allison Finley-Bisset and Alex Scott, from whom I take a lot of counsel. They are great people and the Together union are fantastic. I would also like to thank Evan Moorhead and Alana, my organiser from the party office.

I cannot stop without thanking the people of Maryborough for having faith. They saw the work we did. They know the slogan—and it is not just a slogan—that we put the Maryborough electorate first at all times. As I said in my maiden speech, sometimes I will not be popular on both sides of the House because I will always defend the Maryborough electorate, and that has probably come true. In some instances in the last three years I have not been popular on both sides of the House.

Maryborough is a fantastic electorate. It is one of the oldest electorates in Queensland. It was gazetted as an electorate in 1865. It used to be a joint electorate, then it became a dual membership electorate and then it became a one-member electorate. It has contributed a lot to the Queensland economy over the years and it is coming back. We are on the cusp of big things.

The re-election of the Palaszczuk government will mean that Maryborough will continue to move ahead with some of the projects we announced during the election campaign, with more money being spent on education, health care and the upgrade to Eskdale Park. For the Rugby League fanatics in the room here, Eskdale Park is one of the oldest Rugby League grounds in Australia. The first Rugby League competition in Australia was held at Eskdale Park in Maryborough. It was absolutely one of the top Rugby League places—

**Mr Costigan:** It is the home of the Wide Bay Bulls.

**Mr SAUNDERS:** I will take that interjection from the member for Whitsunday. It is the home of the Wide Bay Bulls and also the 47th Battalion Cup. Very similar to the member for Whitsunday, I called the football there as a young man in my radio days at Eskdale Park. It is great to see the Palaszczuk government making a commitment to Rugby League in the Wide Bay, particularly in Maryborough. With the upgrades we will be able to hold InTrust Super Cup games in Maryborough and get it back as the home of Rugby League for the Wide Bay region. That will be delivered by the Palaszczuk Labor government. It is about putting money back into regional communities. Eskdale Park has not had any money spent on it for years, and this will make Eskdale Park a great Rugby League ground again in regional Queensland.

There is so much that has happened in the Maryborough electorate in the last three years through not only the Palaszczuk government but also the people. The people of Maryborough have now realised that all people in George Street are not bad and that the people in George Street and the government really care about regional Queensland. That is what the Palaszczuk government has done. When you drive out through regional Queensland, no matter where you go we have delivered as a government for regional Queensland, and no more so than what you see in the Maryborough electorate.

I would also like to thank the Premier, the Deputy Premier and the cabinet for their unwavering support when Maryborough was on its knees and the region was suffering. We had a regional cabinet in Maryborough, and they had a great time talking to the local people in my electorate. Not only did they address their problems, but they acted straightaway on the problems of the Maryborough electorate.

**Mr Harper** interjected.

**Mr SAUNDERS:** I will take that interjection from the member for Thuringowa. I would like to say thank you to the people of Maryborough once again for putting their trust in not only me but the Palaszczuk Labor government for another three years. I will give them one guarantee: we will not let them down.