




Speech By  
**Hon. Cameron Dick**

**MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE**

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Record of Proceedings, 19 September 2018

**ADDRESS-IN-REPLY**

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning) (4.26 pm): Representing the electorate of Woodridge in this House is one of the great privileges of my life. Woodridge is a diverse and multicultural community enriched and empowered by the range of nationalities that call it home. Our traditional owners are the Jagera people and the Yugumbir language group whose elders I respectfully acknowledge. But today 238 nationalities and ethnicities also call the city of Logan home. Our community is in a real and practical sense a genuine sample of modern Australia and a clear expression of the success of a nation that has always welcomed the outsider and that has always offered a new start and a fresh opportunity for people born overseas willing to take a chance on us.

What was once the tyranny of distance has become the catalyst of opportunity, and nowhere is that more evident in Queensland than in Logan and nowhere more evident in Logan than in Woodridge. One of the great features of my electorate is the tenacity and resilience of its people. Some who settle in our community have had direct experience of war. Many are refugees. A very large number know what it is to have struggled. Ours is not a community on cruise control. It is not the home of families who have had it easy. That is what has driven me in my political career and why I remain committed to the service of my electorate. I believe in the active, enabling and enlarging role of government and that equality of opportunity, always the central mission of the Australian Labor Party, is most effectively achieved through the power of quality government services.

This parliament achieves its highest purpose when it seeks to advance the interests of the vulnerable and the disadvantaged. I was honoured at the last election to have been returned by the voters of Woodridge with an increased majority, and I take this opportunity to thank them for the faith they continue to have in me. I am committed to repaying that faith by working every day to do what I can to improve the quality of their lives by delivering real outcomes in areas that make a material difference to them.

Part of that commitment was manifested during my period of service as Queensland health minister and minister for ambulance services. I have spoken in this House previously about the great success of our government's specialist outpatient strategy which delivered a 63 per cent reduction in the number of patients waiting longer than clinically recommended for a specialist outpatient appointment—with a reduction of over 70 per cent in the Metro South Hospital and Health Service region which services the Woodridge electorate. Along with the Premier, I was delighted during the last election to announce the Palaszczuk Labor government would commit more than a quarter of a billion dollars to upgrade the Logan Hospital including a \$12 million investment to refurbish and expand the Logan maternity ward.

I was also delighted to deliver the Logan Community Health Action Plan during my service as health minister—an innovative program of health delivery which aims to improve health outcomes to disadvantaged communities by taking a more direct and interventionist approach. Initiatives under this scheme include: the provision of toothbrushes to every prep student in our region to support oral

hygiene; the extension of the good start breakfast program; the establishment of a new youth drug and rehabilitation centre; the initiation of a refugee health information expo; and the setting up of a number of maternity hubs to deliver antenatal care in our community.

When we commenced the community maternity hubs, the statewide level of pregnant women not receiving the recommended number of six antenatal visits was six per cent; in Logan it was 16 per cent, almost three times the state rate. The initial plan was to establish three maternity hubs in the community based on a continuity of care model and targeting vulnerable groups, including Indigenous, refugee and Pasifika women. The hubs have been operational since February and, with all case loads either full or close to it, a fourth midwife is being added to each of the hubs. Additionally, plans to open a fourth hub have been brought forward to this financial year.

The results have been impressive and are a tribute to the effectiveness of the continuity of care model and the midwives who work in these clinics. Only 16 per cent of the births at the hubs have been by caesarean section—half the Queensland average. This is an outstanding achievement. The hubs are also directly engaging in the training of student nurses to support the future rollout of the model. This approach represents a new way of delivering health care that moves beyond the assumption that if you build it they will come. Sometimes it takes more than just hanging out the shingle; sometimes you need to take the shingle under your arm and go out and knock on the door. For some migrant communities, especially those who have escaped war or oppression, there is a degree of distrust of government institutions, so we have to try something different to achieve our objectives of improved health in the community, which is what the Logan Community Health Action Plan has been designed to do.

Following the re-election of the Palaszczuk Labor government, I was honoured to be asked by the Premier to serve as the Minister for State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning. It has been great to see the rise in confidence of the Queensland business community and to see the economy reap the benefits of the government's positive agenda, particularly the 177,500 jobs we have created since coming to office.

I wish to acknowledge the significant manufacturing sector operating within my electorate, particularly in the suburb of Crestmead. As the first dedicated Queensland minister for manufacturing for many years, I am committed to doing what I can to help those businesses prosper and to ensure the more than 170,000 Queenslanders who work in manufacturing continue to have a future in this important part of our economy, including through our government's \$40 million Made in Queensland program. In round 1, there were 53 applicants which received a grant, including the Evolve Group in my electorate of Woodridge which received a Made in Queensland grant of more than \$950,000 for the implementation of a sustainable growth project which will transform this plastic injection moulding company from a traditional blue-collar factory into a world-leading, fully automated, ultra-high-speed manufacturing facility.

A sense of belonging, a sense of participation, is critical to the collective identity and sense of wellbeing of a community. A community is not a suburb, nor a cluster of streets, nor even an electorate; it emanates from a feeling of connection, of relation to the group, of a sense of common purpose and shared experiences. How we live shapes who we are, and who we are is shaped by the communities we form and the infrastructure and services that support them. We should always be mindful of our duty to those we represent, not in a glib or arbitrary way but meaningfully through the conscious actions we take every day on their behalf.

We should always remember that, whilst we may be members of parliament, we are members for communities. Those actions need not be large to be impactful. Whilst I have been delighted by the investment in large infrastructure improvements in my community, like the upgrade currently underway to the Logan Motorway, I am equally proud of the smaller investments that deliver positive outcomes for the people of Woodridge—like the money invested in school refurbishments at Berrinba East State School and Crestmead State School; the health training hubs at Mabel Park State High School and St Francis College Crestmead; the upgrade of the Logan City Netball Association facilities; the installation of lights at the Logan metro football fields; the boost to disability housing; the Homelessness Base initiative; the Crisis Accommodation Program; or funding for a new clubhouse at the mighty Logan Brothers Rugby League Club and the refurbished and expanded BMX facility at Browns Plains.

We often hear that people enter political life because they want to make a difference, which is a concept that can seem so elevated that it can sometimes blind them to the difference they get to make every single day they serve in parliament. We should never lose sight of the great privilege it is to be a member of parliament, the great honour bestowed upon us by those who elected us and the great responsibility we have to them because of it.

One of the best things about these address-in-reply debates is the opportunity it provides to members to publicly thank those who have made it all possible. I am always touched to hear the gratitude that members on both sides of the House express to their families, friends and supporters for the encouragement and help they render in what can be a very challenging life, particularly around election time. Whilst each of us has entered into public life freely and willingly, it is appropriate to take time to remember that it is often those closest to us who must carry most of the cost.

I would like to take this opportunity to once again thank my beautiful wife, Therese, and my two sons, Samuel and Jonathan, for putting up with the demands my political life imposes on them. This is a job that offers all the rewards attached to community service, but the price it exacts is measured in the time it keeps us from those whom we love the most. It is humbling and a little overwhelming to reflect upon the sacrifices they so readily and selflessly make on my behalf. I owe them a debt that I can never repay and I thank them today for their unflinching love and support.

I would also like to thank all those who helped me in my campaign for re-election. I simply could not have done it without you and I am deeply grateful for all that you did for me. In fact, I would like to take a moment to pay tribute to all the volunteers of all political parties. It says something about a person that they are prepared to get out on a street stall, or letterbox a street, or stand for hours on a polling booth because they are committed to an ideal, because they believe in an individual or a cause and have the resolve and drive to get up and do something about it. They are the heroes of our democratic system. In Woodridge, there are plenty of Labor heroes.

One of our party's greatest leaders, Ben Chifley, famously declared that our party's mission was the pursuit of the light on the hill. He believed—as all of us on the Labor side of the House do—that our great political project is the building of a society that is inclusive and fair, that promotes equality of opportunity and delivers affordable services, and where each individual has access to the minimum standards of material sufficiency necessary to lead a full and dignified life. The fact is the light does not burn on the hill but in the outer suburbs and in the offices, supermarkets, workshops, schools, farms, living rooms and everywhere people work, play and sleep—for government in the end is a practical art measured against the delivery of our single enduring key performance indicator: to make the lives of people better.

On 25 November last year, Queenslanders stood at a crossroad, presented with a clear choice between a government with a vision for a confident, inclusive, forward-looking Queensland and a ramshackle alliance between one party obsessed with sacking workers and selling assets and another promoting a toxic blend of xenophobia and the politics of intolerance. It was a great relief, particularly for multicultural communities like Woodridge, that the Queensland people opted for the former and re-elected Annastacia Palaszczuk as Premier of Queensland.

The dividends of that decision are already apparent, perhaps best exemplified by the success of the recent Commonwealth Games—an event secured and delivered by Labor governments. That event reiterated what history has demonstrated—that it is only Labor that has the vision and boldness to deliver on the big ideas. We are the dreamers, the planners and the builders. That our state economy is predicted to lead the nation in economic growth for the next decade is not an accident but the result of getting the policy settings right.

At the end of my address-in-reply following my first election to the parliament as the member for Woodridge in 2015, I made reference to three young African women I met during that campaign named Justice, Prosperity and Happiness. Considering the challenges of their childhood, I was struck by the exuberant optimism expressed in their names, written in the common language of human aspiration and the indestructible capacity for hope.

Whilst it is important to celebrate diversity, we should always take the time to reflect on human sameness in recognition that that which unites us in shared purpose is greater than the arbitrary distinctions we make based on different ethnicities and belief systems. Whilst our circumstances may vary, we are bound by a common motivation to live free from persecution, to win what satisfaction we can from our lives in the manner of our choosing and to leave the world we inherited a better place for our children.

At the last election I committed to work to deliver those ideals—justice, prosperity and happiness—to the people of Woodridge. I am honoured and humbled that the people of the electorate of Woodridge have returned me to this parliament to continue this endeavour.