




Speech By  
**Glenn Butcher**

**MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE**

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**ADDRESS-IN-REPLY**

 **Mr BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (3.25 pm): I rise in this place as the proud member for the Gladstone electorate for the second time. I sincerely thank every single voter who voted for me on 25 November last year.

**A government member** interjected.

**Mr BUTCHER:** It was quite a comfortable margin in the end, which I am very thankful for. The confidence of the people of Gladstone in me is humbling and my commitment to them is that I will be working hard every day to make sure that I continue to do the job that we started on 31 January 2015—that job being to keep achieving great things for every corner of the Gladstone electorate, even though it has now shrunk quite considerably after the redistribution and now only covers the suburbs of Gladstone, Boyne Island, Tannum Sands and a part of Benaraby.

In 2018 it may not be politically correct to say that behind every great man there is a successful woman, but I will take that risk and go a bit further by naming my whole family—my wonderful wife, Theresa, our beautiful daughter, Taylor, and her new husband, Matt, and our son, Blake. Without their love and support, I know that the demands of travel and time away from home would certainly make my job so much harder. A large part of my re-election success belongs to them. I cannot thank them enough for their support along the journey over the years.

I also extend thanks and gratitude to my extended family in Gladstone, with a special shout out to my mother and father, Annette and Neville Butcher, and my mother-in-law and father-in-law, Joanne and Dave Gourley. Their support for me over many years has been second to none and I appreciate it. The opinions and views of trusted people can never be dismissed. I thank them for that and for also being a sounding board over many a barbecue and family gathering. It would also be remiss of me not to mention the innocent assistance of my identical twin brother, Wayne, who often takes one for the team when he is congratulated for yet another great gain for the electorate or even does interviews with the local seven news.

As will be echoed by many in this chamber, success of those in public life can only happen with the support of reliable, competent staff. I say without any fear of contradiction that I certainly have hit the jackpot in that area. To my electorate officer and advisor, Tara Manning, and to my electorate office assistant, Jill Hopson, thank you so much. I know that their passion not only for me but also for the electorate is as powerful as mine. Tara and Jill's dedication and commitment to their roles is invaluable to me and is also unquestionable. I look forward to another term and beyond—much further beyond, I hope—of the same efficiency and support from my staff that I know I can always rely on. To the ever efficient and always obliging Aisha Sidhu, who is my assistant for my assistant ministerial role in Brisbane, thank you for your commitment and support. You are new to the job as well. Being a Gladstone born person is even more special.

It is no secret that being re-elected takes a big team working long hours to bring the desired outcome that we all seek. The Butcher campaign train often left the station very early in the morning and did not return until late at night, and we did not lose one single passenger along the way. Masses of supporters from ALP branches, trade union comrades, and family and friends again rose to the occasion, and together on the night of 25 November we reaped the fruits of the hard work when we celebrated our convincing win. A special part of that evening was when Shelly Holzheimer, who was my campaign director at the time, had a 'shoey' when we heard that the Deputy Premier was also successful in her seat.

While I am talking about Shelly Holzheimer, I want to make special mention of her and acknowledge the work she has done for me over the years. She is certainly a very special person. I want to pay tribute to her in my contribution today. She has been going through a few health issues, and I would like to wish her the best with her health in her recovery.

I acknowledge and am extremely grateful for the support from the two unions of which I am a proud member—the AMWU and United Voice—and every other trade union whose members manned booths and assisted my campaign in many ways. I particularly thank Rohan Webb and Ann-Marie Allan who visited Gladstone on several occasions in the lead-up to the election and during the election campaign to make sure that I had all I needed to have a very, very successful campaign. To those two people I say thank you very much.

I want to make special mention of the dedication, support and reliability of two of my closest friends—Shelly Holzheimer and Matt Burnett, who have stood beside me every single day since I first contested the seat of Gladstone. The Mayor of Gladstone, Matt Burnett, holds his own weight when it comes to not only helping me get over the line but also the fantastic work that he does in our community as the Mayor of Gladstone. We have spent many days and nights sitting around the timber table at Shelly's house not only talking strategy and politics but also talking about a lot of other things including the opposition. I would also like to take the time to thank Shelly's husband, John, for his support of us and for always having a nice cold beer when we go around to their place, to help us maintain hydration during these catch-up sessions.

During my first term I was honoured to be a member of the infrastructure, planning and natural resources committee and then to be chair of the agriculture and environment committee. The role of committees in Queensland ensures that the legislation we pass in this House undergoes consultation with Queenslanders, and that cannot be understated. I valued greatly my time on these committees, the inquiries that we conducted and the Queenslanders I got to meet along the way. To cover just about every part of Queensland in my first term was absolutely amazing.

I was proud to then serve as assistant minister for local government and infrastructure, transport and main roads and now to serve as the Assistant Minister for Treasury in the Queensland government. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Deputy Premier and Treasurer, Jackie Trad, for her ongoing support of me and the leadership and guidance that she has given me in my role as her assistant minister over the last couple of years.

During my first term many great things were achieved for the Gladstone electorate, and most notably was an investment in infrastructure right across the length and breadth of the electorate in areas that matter most not only to me but also to my electorate—health and education. Yes, I am committed to the progression of projects in the years to come. The Palaszczuk government has made an unprecedented level of investment in schools in my local electorate—in excess of \$27 million—and, with the capital investment to build a new high school in the area of Calliope, now in the electorate of Callide, ready for enrolments in 2020, the figure is closer to \$87 million in investment.

As I said, even though Calliope high school is no longer in my electorate after the redistribution, I will continue to advocate for this high school going forward. It was a pleasure to be part of the first committee meeting recently for that school, chaired by the member for Keppel, to make sure that people from the community and surrounding areas are involved in what goes on at that brand-new school. It was wonderful to attend that meeting as the assistant minister to make sure that we keep this project on track.

Make no mistake: this school was at risk of never, ever going ahead under the former LNP government. When we were elected—and I mentioned this in my first speech—the first visit I had from the Premier was to come and help me pull down the 'for sale' sign that the LNP had put up on that land. We know how hard it is for schools to be built on land that is not there ready to be built on. It was great that the community group, ably led by Linda Ninnas, advocated loud and clear to the new government under Anastacia Palaszczuk that we needed to keep the land. Their advocacy to the then minister Kate Jones, who heard our story—and I thank her; she is in the chamber here today—not only made

sure that the school was being talked about but also made sure that the land was saved, and now we are actually delivering a brand-new high school for that community ready for students in 2020. I thank the minister for that.

Infrastructure investment can be seen across almost all local schools in my electorate, and I am proud to be part of a government that is committed to the education of our children. I look forward to opening many of these buildings. I acknowledge Minister Grace Grace who was recently in Gladstone opening four new buildings, and there are another two to open in the coming months.

I am also looking forward to the commencement of the second phase of construction of the new accident and emergency department in Gladstone later on in the year. This is one of the things that I am most proud of in my 3½ years. The first stage is well underway, with the car park now complete. That leaves us to get on with building the \$40 million upgrade to the Gladstone accident and emergency department. We have slowly filled the vacancies of specialists at the hospital with permanent appointments and we will continue to deliver more nurses and more doctors to ensure that patients in my community can get the care they deserve.

One of the most pressing issues raised with me during my first term was that if a child broke her arm on the weekend jumping on a trampoline she would have to be sent to Rockhampton for the simplest of treatments. I am proud to say that we are getting better in Gladstone. That little girl on the trampoline can now get an X-ray, she can have a cast set and she can have that break reviewed all in Gladstone without having to travel up the road to Rockhampton. This might not seem like much, but for Gladstone it is a big achievement. When the health service was suffering from the systemic cuts under the Newman-Nicholls government and from a model of operating on locum after locum, we suffered badly. There is more work to be done in Gladstone. I am actively working towards a service where all fractures, including those requiring surgery, are treated in Gladstone.

I am also sorry to say that recently we have seen the closure of maternity services at the Mater Hospital in Gladstone which is very concerning to my constituents because a lot of private health is subsidised by major industry in Gladstone. To see a service like that close down at the private hospital is certainly very concerning. I would also like to acknowledge Minister Miles, who is here today, who came up with \$1.2 million to invest in the Gladstone Hospital to make sure those 160-odd patients who come through from the Mater can now be taken care of in the public hospital at Gladstone to make sure that women living in the suburbs of Gladstone can have their baby delivered in Gladstone. There would be nothing worse—this is nothing against the member for Rockhampton—than one of our Gladstone residents having ‘born in Rockhampton’ on their birth certificate. Also, the new step-up step-down mental health facility in Gladstone is set to open in the second half of 2018 to fill a gap in our mental health services in Gladstone.

I am proud to see that the Palaszczuk government Works for Queensland program has seen investment in many of our local clubs, including the western suburbs swimming pool, the new BMX track, the Lions Park, the Bunting dog park and a new pump track at Boyne Island—just to name a few who received funding from that wonderful program. I have talked to a lot of those local contractors who have received work under that program. Not only are they so happy for that project to continue, but the Gladstone Regional Council is certainly looking forward to more investment in those special projects that deliver for our community.

To top it off, we will be delivering a \$970,000 Rugby League Centre of Excellence at the home of Rugby League—Marley Brown Oval. I was most proud when this year we held our first ever NRL game when the Titans had to relocate because of the Commonwealth Games. Once again, I thank Minister Jones and her department, and the Mayor of Gladstone with his advocacy, to make sure that we had a fair chance of hosting that first ever NRL game in Gladstone. To see over 8,000 tickets sold in the first week and over a thousand grandstand tickets sold in the first 20 seconds bodes well for the sport in Gladstone, and we will now have a centre of excellence that can support those types of games in Gladstone. It will be great to see all of these projects completed this year to benefit many in our community.

Works for Queensland is a hugely successful program that is delivering fantastic community infrastructure right across my electorate. It is a program that I know councils right across Queensland are embracing. I have travelled around Queensland and have heard from many mayors that this program is allowing them to invest in their community in ways on projects that just would not be possible without it.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the Gladstone Regional Council for the commitment it has given to make Gladstone a better region, a better place to live, a better place to work and a better place to play through projects which it has put forward under this program. Works for

Queensland is also delivering much needed jobs across regional Queensland. The Palaszczuk government has agreed to extend this program and I cannot wait to see what it will continue to deliver for my Gladstone community.

I want to mention another two important programs that are supporting positive outcomes in the electorate of Gladstone—the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program, which the Palaszczuk government reinstated, and the new Back to Work program. Both of these programs are delivering real employment prospects for the people of Gladstone. Skilling Queenslanders for Work gives people a chance to reskill in areas of need, to undertake work readiness activities and an opportunity to experience a totally different type of work.

The Back to Work program is supporting people who are unemployed to gain a job by giving incentives to businesses in Gladstone who take on and keep new employees. The program has evolved to include specific incentives for mature age workers, a real area of need in Gladstone particularly after the LNG boom. I have attended many graduations for these programs and have spoken with many business owners, and I can tell the House that these programs are really changing people's lives—both employees and employers alike.

The other area of significant benefit in my community during my term as the member for Gladstone has been that of grants. From big sporting infrastructure grants from Get Playing Places of \$134,000 to small business grants of \$5,000 or \$2,000 for an event to host Seniors Week or other multicultural events in my community, it is fantastic to see this government supporting our community in a real and genuine way.

We have provided close to \$8 million in grants to over 100 organisations in the Gladstone electorate in my time as the member. The total including some smaller grants is \$7,873,000, which is amazing. Making phone calls to groups like the Boyne Tannum Men's Shed, the Gladstone and District Hockey Association or the Orchid and Foliage Society to let them know they can now install that shed, purchase that mower or put solar panels on their roof is honestly one of the best parts of my job. The benefit of these groups in making our communities more connected and more cohesive cannot be understated, which is why I will always support these groups in any way that I can to ensure that they have the best chance of getting these grants.

The outlook for Gladstone is bright. After the impacts of the downturn in the resources sector and the construction phase of the gas plants coming to an end, we are now looking to the future with new industry opportunities aplenty. The Palaszczuk government has a clear vision for a sustainable billion dollar export oriented industrial biotechnology and bioproducts sector in Queensland, and Gladstone is perfectly positioned to capitalise on this opportunity. Great things are already being achieved including technological advancements at Northern Oil's advanced biofuels plant in Yarwun and the international attention and investment it is receiving.

We have reinstated the Gladstone Development Board which aims to drive industry investment and to promote the benefits of our region as a world-class industrial hub. Gladstone is home to major industry including three large LNG facilities, an alumina smelter, two alumina refineries, a chemical plant and cement works as well as cutting-edge, innovative industries and technology including a pilot biofuel facility and an oil shale demonstration plant.

The Gladstone region is an ideal location for investment containing the 27,000-hectare state development area; access to the port of Gladstone, Queensland's largest multicommodity, deepwater port; direct access to major road and rail connections; access to a large and highly skilled workforce in a world-class regional city; and significant industrial clustering opportunities. Gladstone is the best location in Australia to support a sustainable manufacturing and industrial hub.

The Gladstone State Development Area is a clearly defined area of land established by the Coordinator-General to promote economic development in Gladstone and provides an ideal location for major businesses and industry to invest. There is no doubt that Gladstone is Australia's premier industrial location with a world-class deepwater priority port adjacent to state development land. It is an attractive place for industrial enterprises especially in the renewables sector.

We have also recently approved a half a billion dollar solar farm at Aldoga which is also transitioning with workforce opportunities for people to come back home. So many of my good friends and trade mates have had to work away from their families, and it is so hard for them to leave their families and then come back to Gladstone. Hopefully, these types of projects moving forward over the next couple of years can get those mums and dads back home where they belong, to their families in Gladstone.

In conclusion, I extend my thanks to the Premier, Anastacia Palaszczuk, and all of the ministers in this government for their support of my electorate since I was first elected and for the support that I know will continue into the future. The Gladstone electorate has been starved of its fair share of funding grants for over two decades under an independent member. Since the installation of a fair Labor government which rules for all electorates, my electorate has seen more gains in three years than in the previous 20 years. I stand 100 per cent committed and steadfast in my promise to the people who have shown faith in me to keep working hard each and every day to ensure that, with the backing of this Labor government, the progress will continue in my electorate every single day of the week.