




Speech By
Ros Bates

MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA

Record of Proceedings, 22 March 2018

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (5.37 pm): I stand here today once again humbled by the enormous trust that the people of the Mudgeeraba electorate have placed in me to continue as their representative in this place. This will be my fourth term in this place—the fourth time I have been sent here to act on behalf of Mudgeeraba residents and to fight on their behalf for their priorities.

It is easy to forget that in 2009 Mudgeeraba was a very different place to what it is today. Residents had put up with eight years of a Labor member shamefully ignoring their concerns. Our roads were not receiving the upgrades they needed. Too often residents were forced to drive over crumbling infrastructure to get to work or pick up their kids from school. Our schools were not receiving the funding they deserved. The classrooms that our students were learning in were not up to scratch, as local schools were caught up in Labor's massive maintenance backlogs. Our police were not supported and our community and sporting groups did not receive the funding they needed.

Nine years later, I am incredibly proud of the progress we have made and how I have delivered on the commitments I made in my maiden speech, which locals well know that I use as my report card. Using people power we stopped the overheard powerlines in Reedy Creek. We launched a Schools Planning Commission to investigate a state high school west of the M1. We increased our police numbers. We saved the Elysium Road overpass at exit 75 after Labor tried to close it. We widened the M1 from Carrara to Robina, and the next upgrade from Mudgeeraba to Reedy Creek is on the way. This includes interchange upgrades at exits 73, 77, 79, 82 and 84. After this we will have upgraded the entire length of the M1 throughout the Mudgeeraba electorate, with a total investment of \$611 million. We have seen massive investments in roads that my predecessor ignored, including \$4 million for the Nerang-Murwillumbah Road, \$14 million for Beechmont Road, \$5 million for Worongary Road and \$6 million for the Gold Coast-Springbrook Road. These are commitments I made in my maiden speech, and today I can say that I have delivered.

Since I stood in this place in the 55th Parliament and gave my last address-in-reply, we have also made inroads in some very big local issues. We have alleviated traffic in Reedy Creek which used to face gridlock every morning on our little roundabout for 1.5 hours. If you left home after 7.30am, one would be stuck in traffic waiting as thousands of cars tried to squeeze through a single lane roundabout. This was the only route out for more than 2,000 residents. Now there is a \$9 million Eden View Drive road link which takes the pressure off. This was jointly funded by the state council and Commonwealth working alongside my good friends Councillor Daphne McDonald, Mayor Tom Tate and Karen Andrews, the federal member for McPherson. This upgrade is in addition to a \$400,000 upgrade of the roundabout I delivered in my second term.

I thank Reedy Creek locals for their huge vote of confidence in me at the polls in November. The residents of Carrara, Merrimac and Robina will also finally be getting some relief from traffic. Funds set aside and announced by the LNP in January 2015 were finally spent on the now complete Gooding Drive roundabout upgrade. This is an \$8 million project planned by the LNP, funded by the LNP but

announced by the Labor Party. Admittedly, it was a bit humorous to see the Minister for Main Roads throw on his hard hat and hi-vis vest to announce the completion of this upgrade back in January, a full three years after it was first announced. That is three years of delay under Labor governments. This upgrade was completed with just over two months to spare before the Commonwealth Games.

It was just the latest example of the LNP putting in the hard yards and lazy Labor cutting the ribbon. This project was fully funded by the LNP after I spent years fighting for it, but it took Labor more than 1,000 days to get on and build it. I do not remember Mark Bailey being there with me and the members for Southport and Surfers Paradise back in January 2015 on Ashmore Road when we first announced this funding. We announced this upgrade alongside a number of other LNP upgrades which would be delivered before the Commonwealth Games. Maybe that is because Labor was still sitting on the opposition benches and the minister had never even sat in this House?

I know that the Minister for Main Roads cannot stand it when I set the record straight and pour water on his so-called announcements. It was interesting to see the minister use his personal Facebook account to post late-night comments on my public Facebook page. He obviously cannot handle it when the facts are laid out on the table. But the fact is that the minister's antics do not solve any problems for Gold Coasters sitting in traffic day in, day out under Labor.

The same can be said about the upgrades to the M1 which now are finally getting underway in my electorate between Mudgeeraba and Reedy Creek. We know that, for three years, this Labor government and this minister bumbled and fumbled their way through the history of the M1. They played a political blame game with the feds, and for two years we saw no action from Labor because they do not care about the southern Gold Coast.

It took a visit from the Prime Minister and a commitment from the coalition government to finally push this Labor government into action. But despite a 50-50 funding commitment from the feds, Labor still decided it was not done with the blame game just yet. For months, we saw Labor drag the issue out, refusing to put up its fair share of funding, all the while local residents sat in traffic with nothing getting under way.

Now finally, thanks to the coalition government, we see early works finally wrapping up ready for a post-Commonwealth Games start date, despite all of Labor's determination to hold up this project. But, during this project, we saw the minister up to his usual tricks. He was blaming everyone else for his own woes, making false claims about the LNP's record on the M1. He was trying to claim the LNP had never invested a cent in the M1 but that is just not true.

I can understand why the minister's memory would fail him, because I do not recall him being there when we announced the completion of the LNP's upgrade of the M1 between exits 77 and 79 on 26 September 2014. I stood with TMR officers and Karen Andrews, the federal member for McPherson, as we announced this \$95.5 million upgrade, jointly funded by the LNP state and federal governments on a 50-50 basis. In fact, it was completed ahead of schedule by the LNP and it came in under budget. At the time, the minister had yet to be elected to this place. It was the LNP that got on with the job and upgraded the M1.

Residents of my electorate are rightfully anxious about what to expect for the next three years under Labor. During the election campaign, the LNP made a number of commitments to deliver for the Mudgeeraba electorate. Residents want to know if Labor will deliver these projects, or if it will continue to ignore Mudgeeraba. The LNP committed \$50,000 to clean up the Mudgeeraba Creek, which has been stagnant for far too long. This is a commitment we first made during the 2015 state election campaign, when I stood with the member for Glass House as the then minister for environment to announce funding to get the creek finally cleaned up. It did not take long for Labor to confirm it would not do anything about this in government, and the creek has remained stagnant ever since.

We also committed \$550,000 over three years to fund the Robina Community Legal Centre. This is a vital volunteer community legal centre which has missed out on funding time and again under Labor and this Attorney-General. Most of its caseload is domestic and family violence issues but, for a government that talks the talk on DV, they certainly do not walk the walk as the Robina CLC is ignored time and time again. That is why the LNP stepped in with this announcement which would have seen the Robina CLC able to employ paid staff members and continue its service to the community. Now, with Labor once again at the helm, the Robina CLC's future hangs in the balance. Those opposite need to put their money where their mouths are when it comes to DV and fund the Robina CLC.

We also committed \$300,000 to fund CCTV cameras and bollards at the known hooning hotspot of Pine Creek Road and Nerang-Murwillumbah Road in the Numinbah Valley. This would have been coupled with a \$20,000 investment in flashing school zone signage at Numinbah Valley State School. Hooning at this location has been an ongoing issue for years. Recently, I was disappointed to receive

confirmation from the Minister for Main Roads that he will not step in to fund this project to keep residents safe. It is sadly typical of Labor's careless disregard of hinterland residents in my electorate. In three years, three Labor police ministers and the lazy Labor main roads minister blatantly ignored the safety of hinterland residents. Our police are frustrated and have had enough of being put in danger with no support from the Labor government. It is time for Labor members to stop burying their heads in the sand and finally do something before a tragedy occurs at this intersection.

Finally, we committed \$1.5 million to upgrade the Mudgeeraba and Tallai roads intersection near the Tallai general store and Mudgeeraba soccer club. This was a seven-figure investment in vital safety upgrades and congestion busting at the Mudgeeraba Road-Tallai Road intersection. Sadly, Labor is not interested in building this sort of infrastructure. This intersection is dangerous for pedestrians, children and motorists, which is why the LNP committed to improving safety by upgrading it. Now it is incumbent on those opposite to step up and fix this intersection for Mudgeeraba and Tallai residents.

Last year, I was honoured to be asked by the Leader of the Opposition to serve as shadow minister for health and ambulance services and shadow minister for women. Around the same time, a new Minister for Health was appointed. But whilst he may call himself a doctor with his PhD in union recruitment, he certainly does not understand the needs of our hospital system or health staff on the front line. As a registered nurse and a former hospital administrator, I am appalled that the health system has gone from bad to worse so quickly under this new minister. Just a few weeks into the job, the minister presided over some of the most shocking statistics I have seen in relation to the Gold Coast University Hospital. These figures showed a hospital in crisis. They painted a disturbing picture of a hospital system in crisis on the Gold Coast.

At the time, nearly half of Gold Coast locals who presented for care at the Gold Coast University Hospital were not seen in recommended time frames. On top of that, one-third of patients had to wait more than half an hour in the back of an ambulance before making it into the emergency department. But what stunned me more than these shocking figures from the government was the response from the minister. We saw him buck-passing, ducking for cover and issuing a stunning media release where he tried to explain the problem. Did he fess up in this release and explain that Labor's incompetence is to blame? No. He decided to blame the problem on patients for falling ill. What a sick joke!

Two days into the New Year, the minister was already up to his old Labor tricks. Three weeks later, a damning secret report into the culture of a major unit at the Prince Charles Hospital found potential life-and-death consequences due to serious mismanagement. Labor still has not come clean about the issues at the Prince Charles Hospital or explained how it will fix them. What this secret report showed was shocking waste and mismanagement. These issues are at the very least affecting patient care and possibly leading to misdiagnosis of serious medical complaints.

This is an example of a hospital system that is not being properly managed, after three years of Labor neglect. The minister still has not bothered to do his job and get to the bottom of another issue in his department, despite the buck stopping with him and the Premier. If that is not bad enough, a week later we saw dental waiting list times blow out under Labor. For those opposite who do not remember, we reduced the dental waiting list from 61,405 patients under Labor to zero under the LNP. But after three years of Labor neglect, we had another example of our health system under strain because of a lazy Labor government. It is simply not good enough.

This minister needs to explain why front-line dental services are going backwards under his watch. Queenslanders need to have confidence in their government to give our dental clinics the support they need. Sadly, under Labor, we do not see that happening. Then, less than a fortnight later, we saw reports that the construction of Ipswich Hospital will not start until 2020. That means the expected construction date of the Premier's promised upgrade is still a full two years away from construction, let alone completion. Despite all the media hype and spin, the fine print shows construction of new wings at the hospital are still a long way off and that the proposed upgrade will take place across the next half a decade.

The problem with that is that Ipswich needs more hospital beds right now—today. The latest performance data from the minister's own department shows that ambulance ramping at Ipswich Hospital is now at 22 per cent. It also shows that a whopping 46 per cent of patients—almost half the Ipswich residents who walk through the door of that ED—are not seen within clinically recommended time frames. After three years of Labor, the question remains: why has it taken this long for Labor to get this upgrade underway and why is it still two years away? Our nurses, doctors and paramedics cannot wait another two years as waiting times go from bad to worse. They need this upgrade now.

The story is similar throughout the state when it comes to a lack of resources being provided by this Labor government. Last week I was in Cairns. I visited the hospital and health service and met with the CEO. The story on the ground paints a pretty bleak picture. According to latest data, Cairns Hospital is under severe strain because of inaction from Labor. The latest data shows that Cairns is in crisis after three years of mismanagement. These are people's mothers, fathers, children and grandparents waiting in EDs or on ambulance stretchers to see a doctor.

Of course, then we come to the latest data from Queensland Health. Released just a few days ago, these figures show a crisis engulfing emergency departments across the state. In February the data showed that one in three ED patients were not seen within clinically recommended time frames. Meanwhile, ambulance ramping also increased. These figures will rightfully shock Queenslanders. Behind each statistic is a sick or injured patient in an emergency situation waiting to be seen at a hospital. Behind each statistic is someone who is sitting on an ambulance stretcher wondering when they will be admitted for their urgent health issues. Behind each statistic is a friend or a family member worried sick, wondering if their loved one is going to be okay.

We on this side of the House believe that Queenslanders deserve a world-class health system. Sadly, Labor just is not delivering. Its incompetence is simply causing more misery and pain and suffering for tens of thousands of Queenslanders each month. It is shameful and it is wrong. The Premier promised to improve front-line services, but those opposite cannot even get the basics right. The figures speak for themselves. Thirty-three per cent of patients who presented to an emergency department in Queensland were not seen within clinically recommended time frames. That is an increase from 31 per cent in just one month. Twenty-one per cent of ambulances remain ramped after 30 minutes at a hospital, an increase from 20 per cent last month. What is shocking about these statistics is not just how bad the figures are but the fact that they are actually getting worse from month to month under Labor.

The story is the same on the Gold Coast. Figures are going from bad to worse. Fifty-two per cent of patients who go to the ED at the Gold Coast University Hospital are not seen when they should be. That is up from 50 per cent the month before. At Logan it is even worse. Fifty-four per cent of Logan patients in emergency situations are left waiting for too long.

Ambulance ramping has gotten worse. It is now 43 per cent, up from 40 per cent the month before. At Redlands patients waiting longer than recommended time frames are at 46 per cent. Ambulance ramping is also at 22 per cent. On the Sunshine Coast almost a third of patients at an ED are not seen as quickly as they need to be and at Gympie it is a quarter of patients. At Robina Hospital in my electorate 39 per cent of ED patients are left waiting too long and 30 per cent of ambulances are ramped there for longer than 30 minutes. The story is similar at Toowoomba, at Townsville, at Cairns, at Gladstone, at Rockhampton, at Lady Cilento, at Redcliffe, at Caboolture, at Royal Brisbane, at Prince Charles, at the PA, at Bundaberg and at Hervey Bay.

No matter where you travel as a patient in Queensland, Labor's incompetence follows you. Let us not forget that this is a minister who cannot even run his own office or manage to send a letter. The fact is that whilst this minister chooses to play politics with our health system and launch phoney political campaigns patients are suffering. As the shadow minister for health and ambulance services I am appalled. I am appalled for the front-line health staff—our nurses, doctors and paramedics—who are working hard but are not supported by Labor. Most importantly, I am appalled for Queenslanders who deserve better and I will continue to fight for them and to hold this government to account.

As I conclude, I want to take a moment to thank those who contributed so much to supporting me as I once again put my hand up to represent Mudgeeraba in this place. My children, Ben, Greg and Jill, and my sisters, Cathy and Josie, are my rocks and I thank them from the bottom of my heart for their support and their often candid advice. I thank my colleagues in this House—some such as Tim Nicholls for his support and counsel and also those who are no longer here such as my good friend Jeff Seeney and my best friend Tracy Davis. I also thank my many campaign volunteers and supporters and my staff Jacquie and Alex, who put in such a big effort. Your support will not be taken for granted as I continue to fight for our area in this parliament.