




Speech By
Hon. Dr Steven Miles

MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA

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ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (6.09 pm): It is a great honour to return here to be a part of the re-elected Palaszczuk majority Labor government. I want to start by thanking the people of Murrumba for placing their trust in me as their new local MP.

I owe a huge thanks to everyone who supported me in my campaign. Lots of people worked very hard to win the new seat of Murrumba for Labor and, while I am grateful to them all, I want to make special mention of a few key people: Rachel Smith, my campaign manager and now electorate officer, who kept our madcap show together; Linda and Gary McNair and Antonius Reynierse who worked tirelessly and filled in every gap—they never said no; my dad, Bruce, and father-in-law, Ross—the dads did every early morning and late night setting up stalls and signs and everything else; Hamish Fullerton and Martin Kelly, our star doorknockers; Gursharan Sandhu, the Uber driver who was so impressed by Labor values that he joined the campaign team after driving some of the campaign team home from our campaign launch; our first-time volunteer Elizabeth Pickworth, who wrote to me to say she was so impressed that the Labor Party recognises the important contribution working mothers make both within the community and the economy as a whole—thank you, Elizabeth, for all your help; all the members of the Kallangur and Murrumba branches who welcomed me back and worked so hard; and the now members for Kurwongbah and Bancroft who were enormously supportive, and I thank them. Along with the members for Redcliffe, Pine Rivers and Morayfield, I look forward to the things we can achieve together as Moreton Bay's own Team Red.

I continue to be grateful for the support I received from a range of Queensland unions. I am especially thankful to Sharron Caddie, Gary Bullock and the team from United Voice. Evan Moorhead and the ALP state office team developed a winning strategy and made us all stick to it, and it turns out they were right. There were some other good people who helped out whenever I needed something: Bernard and Mark Power, Roy Wilson, Tim Rose, David Thomas, Nick Heath, Corrine Mulholland, Mayor Allan Sutherland, Jesse Richardson, Phil Murphy, Jim Soorley, Andrew Fraser, James Stewart and Troy Burton.

The seat I served in the last term no longer exists. That means that I am the last-ever member for Mount Coot-tha. It was an honour to serve that community and I want to thank everyone who worked with me, especially the local Labor Party branch members and those school communities. Of course there are still times my family and I miss the inner-city community we lived in for nearly a decade. However, we are all now well settled in our new home in Mango Hill. I grew up nearby in Petrie—my dad still lives there in our family home—and now I get to raise my children in the same area. When I say 'the same area', there is a lot that has changed since I was there. It seems the secret is out that Moreton Bay is one of the greatest places to live and raise a family. The region is booming, and with that comes the need for more services and infrastructure. Ultimately that is why the people of Murrumba voted Labor, because they know that Labor builds infrastructure, employs front-line staff and delivers services to our communities while the LNP cuts vital programs and sells assets.

As the member for Murrumba I will work to deliver the projects our community needs: a new \$60 million high school at Mango Hill that was opposed by the LNP; a vital \$30 million upgrade to Dakabin train station; new bike lockers along the Redcliffe train line; a new \$4.1 million community centre for the people of Kallangur and a new car park for Kallangur State School; and a new barge to replace the much missed *Combie Trader* to Moreton Island, a pet project of the member for Redcliffe. Of course the project I am especially proud to support is the new university at the Petrie mill site. To think that there could be a university at the end of the street that I grew up on is incredible. It will make a huge difference to the lives of kids in the Moreton Bay region not having to travel an hour or an hour and a half to go to uni and being able to work and study closer to home.

The federal government has finally conceded to community pressure and agreed to fund student places at the new university. In the recent budget statement, Peter Dutton stood quietly by while Malcolm Turnbull froze uni places and that threatened to jeopardise this vital project. It seemed that he could not care less about giving the kids in our region a chance at a tertiary education and the opportunities that brings. He did bow though under immense public pressure and the very convincing arguments of Mayor Sutherland, so thank you to everyone who stood and fought for certainty for the Petrie uni. But I now need that same support to make sure that Peter Dutton takes a stand again against his colleagues in Canberra who are withholding a billion dollars of taxpayers' money for operations performed in Queensland's hospitals, including at the Redcliffe and Caboolture hospitals.

Before I move on to talk more about Health, I want to take a moment to thank the people who helped me and my team achieve so much in the Environment portfolio last term. When the Palaszczuk government was elected in 2015, it was with a mandate to protect our Great Barrier Reef and I am proud to say that we invested a record amount—\$246 million last budget—to make the water flowing to the reef clearer and cleaner. Our climate transition strategy focused on creating more jobs in the industries of the future and making sure we can go on enjoying our incredible natural environment with clean air, soil and water. That is why we committed to achieving zero net emissions by 2050 and why we will invest in a \$500 million land restoration fund to plant more trees while creating the jobs of the future here in Queensland.

We introduced tough new environmental laws to prevent Queensland taxpayers picking up multimillion dollar environmental clean-up bills and reformed the financial assurance and mine rehabilitation rules for new and existing mines. This is good for the environment and great for regional Queensland, where there is close to \$8 billion of rehabilitation to do and where local towns are well placed to provide the best people and skills to do it. We legislated to transform North Stradbroke Island—Minjerribah—from a sand mine into a global ecotourism destination. When Queenslanders told us that they wanted a container refund scheme and a plastic bag ban, we delivered. I know the new environment minister, the member for Algeester, will do an excellent job continuing the Palaszczuk government's proud record of protecting Queensland's precious environment as she has done today, moving to implement policies to stop Queensland from being the nation's dumping ground.

I am honoured now to take on the role of Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services. Health is a priority for the Palaszczuk government. I know because it was on the side of the bus. We believe Queenslanders deserve good jobs, a world-class education and the very best health care, and that is what Labor does best. We will continue to make sure our health services care for Queenslanders no matter who they are, what they do or what part of the state they live in because every Queenslanders will need the health system at some point in their lives, and it is our wonderful health professionals who make all the difference.

As health minister I want to be a champion for them, making sure they have what they need to provide the best possible care for Queenslanders whether they are in hospitals, allied health services or working in our Ambulance Service. I think our ambos in particular do the most amazing job—sometimes difficult, sometimes dangerous but an amazing job—so I was proud to sign off on a well-deserved pay rise that will bring them in line with the rest of Australia for the invaluable work that they do.

Our government's first term has been one of delivery and achievement—a fact nowhere more evident than in the health system. We have repaired the system from the Newman cuts by recruiting more than 4,160 nurses, more than 1,600 doctors and almost an additional 1,200 allied health professionals across the state. Now in our second term, we will continue to deliver our commitments. Our Specialist Outpatient Strategy will be extended by \$154 million to ensure patients will continue to have access to safe, quality health care when and where they need it. We will continue to fund additional specialist appointments to deal with increasing demand, which is rising by over 10 per cent a year.

We are investing in more appointments so Queenslanders get the right care at the right time. Queensland is a big state with a vastly dispersed population, but we will not let that interfere with people accessing world-class health care. We are delivering new hospitals in Roma, Kingaroy and Blackall and rolling out big redevelopments of the Logan, Caboolture and Ipswich hospitals.

Of course, the quality of our health care is a reflection of the quality of our amazing staff, which is why we have committed to employing 3,500 additional nurses and midwives to care for our growing population. Those are just the big-ticket items. There is so much more that we will achieve this term.

Finally, I could not have survived the last term without my amazing electorate and ministerial staff, both past and present. I thank them all for their hard work. For staffers, elections are often times to move on and that was the case for my long-suffering office manager, Bec, and driver, Mike. We miss them both. I am even more grateful, though, for those who opted to stay, even after finding out that we would be in the Health portfolio. I thank Danielle, Katharine, Benton, Naomi, Mel, Peter and Ellie.

Most importantly, I want to thank my wonderful wife, Kim, for her unwavering support. Everyone in this place has probably reflected on how hard this job can be on families, but last year was especially hard on my family—moving house and changing school on top of a busy ministerial load, holding one electorate and trying to win another. I would like to thank Kim for being there and for loving me and for all that she does in raising our three beautiful children, Sam, Aidan and Bridie. I am so proud of them. I could not do any of this without them. I commend the motion to the House.