




Speech By
Hon. Yvette D'Ath

MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

Record of Proceedings, 13 November 2018

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (3.12 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the address-in-reply debate of the 56th Parliament and, in doing so, acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we are gathered today—the Jagera and Turrbal people—and pay my respects to the elders past, present and emerging. At the outset I congratulate the member for Mulgrave on his elevation to the Speaker's role—a role I know he will and has discharged with professionalism and integrity by acting fairly and in the interests of all Queenslanders. Additionally, I congratulate the member for Townsville, Scott Stewart, on his appointment as Deputy Speaker of this parliament. While we come to this chamber representing different parties and ideologies, I also congratulate all 93 members on their election to this House, particularly those who have been elected for the first time including the 10 new Labor faces who sit on this side of the House and the member for Cook, Cynthia Lui, who is the first Torres Strait Islander to be elected to the Queensland parliament or any parliament for that matter.

It is truly a great honour to have the support of your community—to be their voice in this place—and I trust that all members will strive daily to fulfil our pledge to well and truly serve the people of Queensland, as I know I will. I have always put the community first and I am sure that all members of this chamber will continue to strive each day to be strong parliamentarians for their communities and collectively for the people of Queensland. While every member will claim that their electorate is the best, I know that the Redcliffe electorate is the best electorate in Queensland. The Redcliffe electorate encompasses Clontarf, Woody Point, Margate, Kippa-Ring, Newport, Scarborough, Moreton Island and of course Redcliffe surrounded by the magnificent Moreton Bay. However, the Redcliffe electorate is more than just a collection of suburbs; it is truly a community, a community which thrives from year to year, and I am proud to have the honour of serving the Redcliffe community, particularly over the past 11 years both as the member for Redcliffe and the former federal member for Petrie.

I take this opportunity to thank all of our wonderful community and not-for-profit groups and organisations which work tirelessly day in and day out to ensure that everyone in our community receives a fair go. We have amazing community organisations like Chameleon Youth Housing, Redcliffe Area Youth Space, the Redcliffe Police Citizens Youth Club, Redcliffe Meals on Wheels, Redcliffe Lions and Rotary clubs, Coast Guard Redcliffe QF3, Quota, ROPE, Zonta Club of Redcliffe, Tuesday Club of Redcliffe, Encircle and Breakaway, the Breakfast Club Redcliffe, the men's shed and the Redcliffe Drop-in Centre, just to name a few. I thank the volunteers of these organisations and the many others in our sporting clubs, service clubs, P&Cs and P&Fs across the Redcliffe peninsula.

Redcliffe is certainly the place to be and the Palaszczuk Labor government is ensuring that our region has the support it needs to continue to thrive. Some of the highlights are 12 extra teachers, 11 extra teacher aides and two extra guidance officers in addition to approximately \$14.3 million in new buildings and extra classrooms across Redcliffe to give our next generation the education they deserve, including the Clontarf High manual arts block upgrade, the Woody Point Special School classroom

refurbishments, extra classrooms for Redcliffe Special School and a new hall, administration block and sporting facilities at Redcliffe State High School as well as school maintenance and minor works at various schools.

There is \$22.1 million in extra hospital funding to support 25 extra doctors, 137 extra nurses and midwives, 23 extra allied health workers, 36 extra beds and three extra ambulances at Redcliffe Hospital. In addition, there is \$46 million for a new four-storey, 604-bay car park at Redcliffe Hospital to support patients, visitors and staff access the hospital. We are also investing in the redesign and equipment upgrade for the special care nursery, the birth suite and the paediatric ward at the hospital.

There is investment in both ramp upgrades and dredging works across the peninsula. There is a commitment to go to tender for the re-establishment of a barge service from the peninsula to Moreton Island. We are building 30 new social housing properties in Redcliffe over the next five years and there is a \$250 million investment in local roads, including the major upgrade works at the Gateway Motorway and Rothwell intersection upgrade. I thank everyone for their patience with the Gateway Motorway upgrade. I know when it is finally completed we will all see the benefits in being so close to the airport and to see the Redcliffe peninsula as not just a place where people go to retire but a place where you can live and work and still work in areas like the Brisbane city with that travel being convenient through the improvements to the Gateway.

Like everyone in this chamber, we are here because of the hard work of a number of people and I take this opportunity to thank my amazing volunteers and branch members for their support during the recent election campaign and indeed over many years. There are simply too many names to list, so I will not attempt it. Those who helped know who you are and I am forever grateful. I would also like to thank my hardworking electorate staff. Like many members and in particular ministers, we are away from our electorate offices for periods of time and our electorate staff are the backbone of our offices, ensuring that constituents on a daily basis have access to the information and services they need. I want to thank Karl and Jenny in particular as well as Ollie, who is a recent addition to our office, and Eddie, who recently retired from my office. I want to thank Eddie for his incredible service over the last term of parliament. I also thank my past and present ministerial staff for their dedication and tireless work on behalf of the people of Queensland. They make my job so much easier. I also thank the incredible department that I work with, the Department of Justice and Attorney-General.

I also pay tribute to the unsung heroes of my family—my husband and my two children who, for many years, have supported me in my role as the then federal member for Petrie and now the member for Redcliffe. They truly are the ones who make the greatest sacrifice. They know that I have attended more school events at other kids' schools than their own. They know that mum has missed many important occasions—have not been there for every sporting carnival and many important birthdays—but I have to say they have never once complained, they have never once chucked a tantrum and it has been like this for them from the ages of four and six. There have been tears of disappointment from time to time, but my kids have just been an incredible strength for me and I thank them so much, and my husband of course, who himself is a shiftworker. Our life has always been crazy. Whenever anyone asks me how we balance it, I say I just try not to overthink it because I do not know.

We just go day by day, week by week, and somehow make it work, as do so many other families—not just in this place but every day in the work that people do. Finally, I thank the people of the electorate of Redcliffe for again putting their faith in me. I end where I began by pledging well and truly to serve the people of Queensland but, more importantly, the people of the Redcliffe electorate.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I see leave to have the remainder of my speech incorporated in *Hansard*. I can advise that the Deputy Speaker has reviewed and approved the contents of my speech for incorporation and an electronic version has been made available to *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Palaszczuk Government vs Previous Government

I am proud to be a member of the Palaszczuk Labor Government delivering on our election commitments and restoring not only frontline jobs and services which were cut by the former LNP Government, but also the public's faith in their government, a government which has the best interests of all Queenslanders at its core.

And while Queenslanders have recently witnessed the chaos, confusion and instability which is the Federal Liberal and National Party coalition in Canberra, the Palaszczuk Government is providing stability for Queenslanders and getting on with the job of advancing Queensland's priorities.

It is no secret that when I became the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice on 16 February 2015, the justice system in Queensland was fractured and was suffering from three years of neglect by the LNP Government.

For those who were not in this chamber during those times, or for those who wish to forget, the Newman LNP Government took aim at anyone and everyone. And while I will not stand here and rattle off a list of the LNP's failures, here is a flavour: They used their huge one term majority to pass legislation based on ideology, rather than considered reasoning and science, which was

later found to be un-constitutional. They closed down diversionary court programs which are aimed at breaking the cycle of offending and providing opportunities for people. They took aim at the legal fraternity and in particular our judges. They removed provisions in the civil partnership legislation in relation to ceremonies, for no particular reason other than spite and ideology.

They sacked the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee. I outline these failures not to be negative or adversarial, but to paint a picture, a starting point if you like, of the challenges the Palaszczuk Labor Government was facing when we took office in 2015.

First Term Achievements Overview

Now let us fast forward from the days when those opposite sat on the Treasury benches to how the Palaszczuk Government has already delivered for Queenslanders.

During the last term of Parliament, in minority government, as the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills I introduced and was proud to successfully navigate the passing of 29 bills. And as many would know, some of these bills were not simple pieces of legislation, but enablers of strong reform to increase openness and transparency, tackle serious and organised crime, tackle alcohol-fuelled violence, restore front-line justice services, support equal rights for Queenslanders and strengthen our laws in relation to the prevention of domestic and family violence.

Openness and Transparency

We delivered on a key election commitment to restore Queensland's integrity with the passing of various electoral reforms, namely the lowering of the threshold for political donations to be made public, from \$12,800 to \$1,000 and these laws were made retrospective from 21 November 2013.

These changes were fundamental in restoring openness and transparency in our political system. Before then, someone could walk into any electorate office or candidate's office and give them a donation of \$12,799 and no one would be any the wiser.

And while we on this side of the House have complied with these new requirements, the record speaks volumes for those opposite, with the LNP challenging the legislation in the Supreme Court and when they did not get the outcome they wanted there, they have now taken it to the Court of Appeal. And while I will not comment further on this matter, as it is before the courts, it begs the question, what do those opposite have to hide?

LNP are also fighting the developer donations ban in the High Court.

Unsurprisingly, the Morrison Federal Government has jumped on the band wagon as well and have snuck in several amendments to their Electoral Funding and Disclosure Bill, which will try to override Queensland's \$1000 disclosure threshold and Queensland's ban on developer donations.

Absolutely shameful.

We also removed the draconian voter ID requirements which were implemented by the LNP Government. These requirements would have seen many Queenslanders unable to vote, as they, for many reasons may not have access to identification documentation.

I am proud that we introduced real-time donation disclosure rules, which allows the public to see in real time who is donating to their elected officials and candidates.

Gone are the days where Queenslanders had to wait until after an election to see who has donated to who and I thank the Electoral Commission of Queensland for their work in the establishment of this online system.

Queenslanders can be assured that Queensland has a strong and well-resourced Crime and Corruption Commission working daily to stamp out crime and corruption in our state. We only have to look at the recent public activities of the CCC to understand that they are serious about their job.

But the CCC can only be as effective as the legislation which forms the foundation of its existence and I am proud that as Attorney-General we passed legislation to strengthen the independence of the Crime and Corruption Commission to provide stability after the turbulent times of the former LNP Government.

This year we also saw an increase in the CCC's budget, with an additional \$7.4 million over four years to provide it with the resources it needs to undertake vital work and I commend the professionalism and dedication of the CCC's Chair Alan MacSparran QC and his team.

Keeping Our Communities Safe

One of the primary jobs of any parliamentarian, in particular the first law officer of the state, is to keep our community safe. And during the past four years, the Palaszczuk Government has been introducing a number of legislative and other reforms to ensure strong legal frameworks are in place, which can stand up to the scrutiny of our court system, if required.

The Palaszczuk Government took to this Parliament the toughest and most effective laws to tackle serious and organised crime and the Parliament voted to support those changes.

The changes delivered a package of organised crime laws that tackle everything from child exploitation rings to outlaw motorcycle gangs and fraudsters.

Queenslanders and visitors to our great state should be able to enjoy everything that Queensland has to offer, including our great night life, without fear of being harmed.

In opposition, we promised we would take action to tackle alcohol-fuelled violence, and I was humbled to work with maxillofacial surgeon and ministerial colleague, Dr Anthony Lynham and community stakeholders on delivering a suite of evidence-based reforms to make our safe night precincts safer.

If anyone is in any doubt why we needed to strengthen the laws in this area, I would urge you to sit down with Minister Lynham to hear his stories, his firsthand stories of how he, for many years, would see the trauma caused by callous and unprovoked attacks in our safe night precincts, as a surgeon. I take this opportunity to thank Minister Lynham for his tireless work in this area, over many years.

The prevention of domestic and family violence is everyone's business and we have strengthened the laws to help curb this scourge on our community.

In particular we have ensured that a circumstance of aggravation can be applied to all criminal offences when committed in a domestic violence setting.

A new offence of choking, suffocation or strangulation has been introduced in Queensland's Criminal Code. The code has also been amended to provide for a definition of "domestic violence offence" and to ensure that any offence that is committed in a domestic and family violence context is noted on an offender's record, while increasing the maximum penalty for breaches of domestic violence orders.

We also established the Specialist Domestic and Family Violence Court which was first trialled at the Southport court, but is expanding to Beenleigh and Townsville with circuits to Mount Isa and Palm Island, after a \$69.5 million investment over four years by the Palaszczuk Government.

This specialist court service will provide an integrated civil and criminal domestic and family violence court and is our hub of innovation for the development of best practice in the delivery of domestic and family violence justice services.

I am also very pleased that locally, upgrades have been made to Redcliffe Courthouse to provide more suitable facilities for vulnerable witnesses including for domestic and family violence victims. While these are strong steps forward, as legislators we know that the laws which are debated and passed in this chamber are just one element of ensuring peace and good order in our society. It takes everyone in our communities to take a stand and to no longer turn a blind eye to this violence.

Restoring Front-Line Justice Services

One of our primary goals is to be a responsive government. A government for all Queenslanders, regardless of their post code. We have reinstated the Drug and Alcohol Court by providing over \$20 million in funding over the forward estimates. This is in addition to \$43 million over five years for non-government agencies to provide drug and alcohol services across Queensland.

This court targets the underlying cause of crime and provides an intensive and targeted response to adult offenders with severe drug and alcohol issues.

It is important to realise that these are not 'soft options'. Addressing an addiction is a difficult and often painful process, but it is vital to breaking the cycle of drug and alcohol misuse and criminal offending.

We have also re-opened the Murri Courts, an important tool in diverting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from the criminal justice system, where they remain over-represented in Queensland.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all who are involved in our diversion courts, in particular our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders.

Equality

Queenslanders, Australians indeed anyone across the globe should have the right to be treated equally.

That is why I'm proud the Palaszczuk Government reintroduced civil partnerships restoring equality and fairness for all Queenslanders, regardless of their gender, allowing them to celebrate their relationship with a civil partnership ceremony.

When it comes to the most important relationship in our lives, language and rituals are important and I am pleased that I was able to move and pass legislation in this chamber restoring a choice for Queensland couples that should never have been taken away.

We amended section 304 of the Criminal Code to remove what was known as 'gay panic' defence.

We have removed a longstanding source of discrimination from the Criminal Code by standardising the legal age of consent to 16 and have apologised to members of the LGBTI community who were convicted of historical homosexual activity in Queensland.

Training and Skills

If anyone has listened to my previous speeches in this place or knows my background, they would know that one of my strong passions is education and training.

One of our Government's proudest achievements upon coming to government was the restoring the successful Skilling Queenslanders for Work program which was axed by the LNP Government.

Skilling Queenslanders for Work has a proven track record of delivering real employment opportunities for Queenslanders. It provides skill development, training and job opportunities for unemployed, disengaged or disadvantaged Queenslanders through a suite of targeted skills and training programs.

And I note with pleasure the current Minister for Training and Skills Development's announcement on 5 September 2018 that 'more than 73 per cent of people who completed one of the Skilling Queenslanders for Work projects funded through the initiative in 2016 had reached a positive outcome found a job, taken on further training or returned to school.'

Creating jobs in a strong economy is one of the Palaszczuk Labor Government's Advancing Queensland's Priorities and I am pleased to have been involved in the re-introduction of this successful program.

2018 and Beyond

While there has been strong reform undertaken already, there is always more to do, to ensure our state is the best it can be.

As Attorney-General and Minister for Justice I will continue to strive to ensure that our communities are safer, and that Queenslanders have access to the services they need.

We have introduced a Bill which, if passed, will send a clear message that Revenge Porn is not acceptable.

We have also introduced and passed historic laws that make abortion legal after 119 years and make it a health issue, which it rightfully is.

The Government has raised and will continue to fight for fair consumer protection laws, including fairer rules around gift cards and for improved protections for those with lemon vehicles.

Ministerial Appointment

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the strong leadership of our Party Leader and Premier, The Honourable Anastacia Palaszczuk.

While the success of the government is made up of the collective contributions of many, our reform agenda and strong record of delivering for all Queenslanders has certainly been led from the top. I would like to thank the Premier for continuing to put her trust in me by appointing me as Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Leader of the House in the second term of government.

Leader of the House

As Leader of the House I would like to acknowledge my immediate predecessor, the Member for Sandgate, Minister Hinchliffe for his work as Leader of the House.

The Member for Sandgate is a font of knowledge when it comes to Parliamentary procedure and kick started some of the significant reforms to the business of this House.

As Members would be aware, reform is not just occurring to legislation and policy, but also the rules and procedures which govern the way this place, the people's House operates.

The 56th Parliament has considered and endorsed new sitting hours, bringing our Parliament in line with other jurisdictions. And recently it has introduced a new Business Committee model to assist in streamlining the work which occurs in this chamber.

We are all elected to represent our communities, but we must do that in a positive and considered manner and I am sure that with the recent reforms and the respectful will of all members, we will be able to make this chamber, a place of constructive and positive debate for the benefit of all Queenslanders.