




Speech By  
**Bart Mellish**

**MEMBER FOR ASPLEY**

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Record of Proceedings, 25 February 2021

**ADDRESS-IN-REPLY**

 **Mr MELLISH** (Aspley—ALP) (5.29 pm): I acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet here today and pay my respects to elders past, present and emerging and those of the area that I represent. It has been just over a year since Queensland recorded its first case of COVID-19 and the Palaszczuk government declared a public health emergency. Since that time over 1.7 million tests have been conducted and over 1,200 people have recovered from COVID-19 infections in Queensland. It has been an unprecedented global pandemic, with repercussions to global trade, culture and population movements for decades to come. Queenslanders did put in an extraordinary effort to contain the virus which means that we are now enjoying a relatively open economy and lifestyle.

A strong health response has meant that Queensland has had the strongest population growth in the nation, the largest rise in jobs in December and the strongest growth in housing finance commitments of any state. While the world is still battling COVID-19 and as we wait for the Commonwealth's vaccine rollout to speed up, we cannot afford to forget the unpredictable nature of the virus. We all need to keep up social distancing, hand hygiene and, most of all, keep looking after each other. We are investing in Queensland businesses to keep Queenslanders in jobs and I am proud to be part of a government that is continuing this in my second term. Earlier this week it was great to see the first vaccine jab in Queensland with nurse Zoe Park on the Gold Coast and it was great to see that this had been followed up by the PA Hospital yesterday. I look forward to seeing this continue.

Locally last term we achieved a lot in Aspley. My notes go over a page, so I will try to summarise them pretty briefly. In the first term we secured money for the Beams Road overpass—something that has been wanted for more than 20 years. There is funding on the table now from all three levels of government and it will be great to see construction start later this year. Construction starts very soon on the diverging diamond interchange at Strathpine Road and Gympie Arterial Road. The member for Pine Rivers spoke about this earlier, but this is a great project that the whole of Bald Hills will benefit from in terms of people getting in and out of the suburb. It is going to be great once that is completed.

There has also been funding for noise barriers in Aspley, and work will start soon. I was very pleased at the recent election to secure funding for additional noise barriers in Bald Hills. Often when I visit that area people bring up the issues of mosquitoes—there is not enough funding by council for mosquito control—and noise from the road. Sometimes in Bald Hills it is like being at the ocean but not quite.

Last term it was great to see the Northside Indoor Sports Centre open. This is a new five-court facility in the heart of Zillmere in a disused shed that is going to be great for generations to come. It will be the new home for the Northside Wizards. It is already in use, but many other sports will be able to use it and this is a great use of this precinct. It is 100 metres from the Zillmere train station right in the heart of Zillmere, an area that needs jobs. Whilst that is great to see, next door to that we put the Jabiru Community College into another disused shed. This is a great community college that had to move thanks to council renovating a library. It did not have anywhere to go, but we were able to secure it a funding grant to move in there. It is great to see the work that it has done and it really is a fantastic little precinct that has been set up in that area.

We also saw an additional 70 parks at the Geebung park-and-ride, and that is great for Geebung locals whose streets were blocked by cars. The nearby Geebung Bowls Club got an upgrade, and that is great to see. That is such a good community club that helps out in ways above and beyond. For example, it is the new home of the Queensland Blind Bowlers' Association and it is great to see it look after them every week. In the first term we also had the brand new Carseldine sports precinct which is a great local win that, again, will be there for generations to come. I was really pleased to work with local sporting clubs such as Aspley Devils Rugby League, the Bracken Ridge cricket club and the Bridgeman Baptist football club about the use of these fields going forward. The way that they came together and negotiated how they will use these fields going forward was great. They are a great community asset.

Nearby we have the footbridge that we put over Cabbage Tree Creek, and that is great news for Aspley State High students in particular. Previously they would have to cross a creek—a dirty old stormwater drain—to get to and from Carseldine if they were going there from the north side. We were able to put a footbridge there which is a great initiative that means that the kids can get around a lot more easily and will benefit the future connectivity of Zillmere, Aspley, Carseldine and the broader area. We saw lights go in at the Aspley Hornets so they can host a higher level of games. It is a great club. I was also very pleased to secure funding for it to move into the national second tier competition this year. It really is a club that is going from strength to strength.

This term I look forward to Beams Road continuing, the installation of noise barriers in Bald Hills and the new Craigslea volleyball centre of excellence for which we secured \$10 million in the last election. That is something that Craigslea has been after for many years. It is the best volleyball school in Queensland, and that is not just me saying it because it consistently is. It is good that it will have the facilities to match its excellence going forward. We look forward to seeing what we can do to make Queensland the volleyball capital of Australia, and I am sure that the Olympics bid will help in that regard.

I am very pleased that this term I have additional responsibilities given to me by the Premier regarding veterans. There are a lot of important issues. One of them is that the Brereton report from the federal government needs to be dealt with quickly and competently. I have met with many veteran support groups already and many are advocating for this to be dealt with by the federal government in a timely manner. It needs to ensure that these issues are dealt with thoroughly and promptly. The last thing many veterans want is this issue remaining unresolved for many years. This week it was great to see that the Premier could announce that Anzac Day is going ahead in 2021 as per normal. It is a great thing for veterans to get out there and for the community to see them out there and to continue what they do every other year except for 2020. Let us keep our fingers crossed for that.

With regard to trade, there is no doubt that this is a very challenging time globally. Economic connectivity has been dealt a massive blow over the last year for obvious reasons. Many supply chains are struggling to remain intact and the cost of doing business overseas for exporters and importers alike has dramatically gone up in almost all sectors. It is clear that COVID has caused a massive rethink of what we make here and what we import. It has been fantastic to see the gearing up of local PPE manufacturers, for example, and the retooling of industries to different purposes.

I thank the Premier, the Treasurer and the Deputy Premier for our strong health response and our strong economic response over the past year. At the end of the day, that was what the election was fought on. So many times in here we have these esoteric debates about issues such as whether a road project is coming this month or next month, but people saw that there was a real issue which affected their health, affected their job and affected the economy and they saw that we had a much better plan and a much better approach, and any calls that say that that was as a result of anything else—it was a broader narrative—are misguided. They saw the issue, they saw that we had a better approach of dealing with the issue and they rewarded us.

On the health front we are the best performing state in the country in the best performing country in the world. Not to throw stones, but New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia have all had their much publicised recent outbreaks and issues. We have not had that at that level and we have dealt with it swiftly where we have.

I congratulate all re-elected members in this House. I congratulate Mr Speaker for his reappointment to the chair. I congratulate all temporary chairs and the member for Greenslopes for the Deputy Speaker position. I congratulate my neighbours—the members for Sandgate, Nudgee and Pine Rivers. I was even going to congratulate the member for Everton as my other neighbour, but he was being a bit rude earlier so maybe I will not. I particularly congratulate my new neighbour, the member for Stafford. He will make a great contribution in this place in years to come. I also pay tribute to Dr Anthony Lynham, the former member for Stafford. I will sincerely miss his camaraderie and his fantastic stories that he would tell at community events. Some of the stories were also true!

I sincerely thank my electorate office staff who have worked long hours over the last three years to support me in my role as the local member and, more importantly, to support the community. Rosemary, Chris and Bella as well as tall Chris, Paul, Jack, Georgia, Belle and Louen all made fantastic contributions. When the lockdowns were starting in March and April last year, we shifted what we did entirely. Our office set out targets to contact as many vulnerable people in the community and offer support where we could. I thank those in my office and volunteers for helping our community throughout this crisis. Whenever we called for food donations and the like, the generosity of our community was really great to see.

I would particularly like to thank Rosemary Hume, my electorate officer, who is retiring tomorrow. Rosemary has given decades of service to members of parliament, some more difficult than others. She does not tell me where I fall on that spectrum, but hopefully it is at the better end. She has given decades of service to the great Australian Labor Party in particular. She has helped me personally and Labor in Aspley win two elections and I will miss her calm presence in the office greatly, as will our team and the countless community groups and constituents she interacts with on a daily basis. She has been a great mentor to myself, to many other candidates and she is a great promoter of young women in the party in particular.

My 2020 campaign team are too numerous to mention and I have thanked them in other forums. We really had the hardest working, smartest, most agile and most disciplined team that one could imagine. We were winning all the metrics and hitting all the targets that we gave ourselves. We did not even have to cook the metrics this time when reporting back to party office—we did that well! Thanks to my whole team, but in particular to my campaign manager Bisma. She always kept me on track, always ran a fantastic team and I cannot thank her and the team she led enough. We had three booths this election. I think we were one of the only Brisbane seats to have three booths. It was a lot of work so thanks to everyone who helped out on those really late nights where there was about one person every 20 minutes.

I also thank my local senator, Senator Anthony Chisholm, my local federal MP, Anika Wells, and my local councillor Jared Cassidy for their help with the campaign, and also former treasurer and member for Lilley Wayne Swan for launching my campaign. I also thank Jules Campbell, Zac Beers and Mitchell from party office. I thank Chris Gazenbeek from the SDA, Peter Biagini from the TWU, Gary O'Halloran from the plumbers union and Steve Baker from the AWU for their help on the campaign. There were also plenty of local hospital staff from the Together union helping our campaign, so also thanks to Alex Scott.

I thank my wife and our young fella Oscar, who got in more campaign photos in the first four months of his life than most people do in a lifetime, and my many non-political friends who helped out. I thank my broader family, particularly my parents and parents-in-law. My parents-in-law babysat all day on election day and could not come to the party. They did a stellar job. My parents did a lot of pre-poll. They sat out at one of the smaller sites and did a really great job.

Continuing on a personal level, it has been a big year. I have had two throat surgeries. I was unable to speak properly for a few months last year. We had a newborn during the election campaign. It was a massive year. I know many in our community had a much more difficult year so I am not complaining. I look forward to continuing to work hard every single day for our local area and for the state more broadly.

Primarily I thank the people of the Aspley electorate. I will never take their support for granted. I will work hard every day. I will fight for results that we can get locally. I am really pleased to be able to help deliver for them, to be able to help contribute to our local area, for another four years.