




Speech By
Brent Mickelberg

MEMBER FOR BUDERIM

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ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

 **Mr MICKELBERG** (Buderim—LNP) (5.49 pm): I rise to contribute to the address-in-reply debate. At the outset I would like to place on the record my congratulations to all members elected to the 57th Parliament. In particular, I would like to acknowledge the member for Southern Downs for his brave contribution this morning. He is a fellow veteran and I wish him well on his journey over coming months.

It is a tremendous honour to be entrusted for a second term as my community's voice on the issues that affect their lives each and every day. As the Governor noted in his speech, we are elected first and foremost to serve our communities—something that is too easy to forget in the hustle and bustle of life as an MP. The motto that I was elected on in 2017 was 'service, not self-interest'. I commit to honour the trust the people of Buderim have placed in me by continuing to conscientiously and faithfully serve them.

I am here because I have always believed in putting your hand up and having a go, rather than complaining from the sidelines. That is why I am here representing the community that my wife, Anna, and I chose to raise our little tribe in. I am privileged to live in and represent an area which over the last 12 months was considered the most in demand Australian suburb to buy a house in. In fact, Buderim was the only Queensland suburb that made the top 10. Australians from all states are flocking to Buderim because of our great lifestyle, tree lined streets and strong sense of community. My first priority is to protect that way of life.

I congratulate the government on being returned and I acknowledge that Queenslanders voted to return Labor with an increased majority. There are a multitude of reasons why Queenslanders voted the way that they did. As many speakers have noted, undoubtedly the pandemic weighed on many Queenslanders' minds when they were casting their vote. Many Queenslanders were understandably scared, and numerous older voters in my electorate informed me that their vote was being heavily influenced by a desire for stability at a time of great uncertainty. This does not mean that other issues like law and order, a lack of investment in infrastructure, failures of leadership and integrity or health system failures did not matter to Queenslanders. These issues continue to be a key concern for residents in my electorate, and I will continue to voice their concerns when and as necessary.

While I accept the election result as the will of the people, it was nonetheless disappointing. It was disappointing because I know that the former leader of the opposition, the member for Nanango, Deb Frecklington, would have been an exceptional premier—an exceptional premier with a genuine vision to build a more prosperous Queensland. On a personal level, I would like to acknowledge the considerable sacrifice made by the member for Nanango and her family. I would also like to acknowledge the capable and loyal service of the former deputy leader of the opposition, the member for Everton.

To the new leadership team of the member for Broadwater and the member for Toowoomba South, I too would like to extend my congratulations. I know that they are the right people for the job of holding this tired third-term Labor government to account and on charting an alternative vision for Queensland. I am honoured to have been entrusted to serve in the shadow cabinet. I am confident that, despite the long four-year journey ahead of us, collectively this side is up to the job.

The election result was also incredibly disappointing because two of the best of us are no longer here. To my mates Marty Hunt and David Batt, thank you for all that you have done and all that you continue to do serving your communities. I look forward to both of them returning to this place in November 2024.

Mr Minnikin: And they will!

Mr MICKELBERG: They definitely will. I know that for both Marty Hunt and David Batt being a member of parliament was never a job; it was about serving their community, just as they continue to do.

Like everyone who is privileged to serve in this place, I would not be here today without a team of hardworking true believers. To everyone who handed out how-to-vote cards in the sun, whacked in signs or stood on the side of the road waving a corflute, I would like to extend my sincere thanks. Without the blood, sweat and tears of the many volunteers who show up time and time again, we on this side of the House would not get the chance to be their voice.

As I said in my maiden speech, I know that I stand here today because I am the LNP member for Buderim and I commit to faithfully continue to fight for the values that all of us on this side of the House hold dear. I would like to especially acknowledge the members of my campaign committee who were again the backbone of our campaign to retain Buderim. To Mitchell, Adrian, Frangi, Graham, Al, Ted, John, Eric, Lee and my father, Graeme: I say thank you for the long hours you all put in. I know that, like many party members, you have all fronted up for multiple campaigns and it takes commitment to drag yourself out of bed at 5 am to attend a market stall—often with the member for Maroochydore—or to letterbox for days in the sun.

Just as I could not be here without the support of many self-less volunteers, so too must I acknowledge the commitment and sacrifice of my beautiful wife, Anna, and our three beautiful children—Lara, Alex and Ella. Since I made my maiden speech in this place our little tribe has grown by one with the birth of Ella, who has brought so much joy to our lives. Soon our little tribe will grow again with the addition of another little man.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

Mr MICKELBERG: Thank you.

Mr Minnikin: He's got the numbers!

Mr Crawford: He's branch stacking!

Mr MICKELBERG: I need every one! Given our newest addition is due any day, it is fair to say that my presence here this week has an element of risk attached to it, but hopefully our little man can delay his arrival until my return to Buderim tomorrow.

Being the parents of three young children, my frequent absences performing duties as a local member have placed a heavy burden on Anna, who has sacrificed time and time again to keep our family happy and healthy. For that I say thank you. I know that without all of Anna's sacrifices I would not be able to represent the people of Buderim.

To Lara, Alex and Ella, I know that my absences are hard on you guys too and you should know that I miss you all more than anything when I am away from you. No matter what has happened, my FaceTime chats with them all are the highlight of my day. The fact that they are more interested in how the parliamentary chickens are faring than what exciting thing happened in question time or the media that day reminds me every single day of what is most important.

To my eldest daughter, Lara, you are growing so quickly and I am amazed at how good you are getting at reading. I am sure that pretty soon I will no longer be required for a bedtime story because Lara can already do it for herself, but secretly I am hoping she will humour me and let me keep doing it. I will always cherish our moments hanging out or just moving the cattle, and I promise that I will try to get along to help out in your classroom again soon.

To my son Alex, I know how hard you find it when I am away. Last time I delivered a speech like this Alex could not even walk. Now he is running around and kicking a footy like a little champion. Alex's smile lights up a room and, although I will never understand his obsession with Iron Man and Spider-Man, I love his inventive Lego creations and how he cares for his mum.

To Ella, you have been the perfect baby since the moment you were born. I cannot remember the last time she woke me up in the middle of the night and, despite the fact that we are solidly in the middle of the terrible twos, the sight of Ella greeting me at the top of the stairs yelling, 'Daddy!' picks me up every time.

I am proud to be able to represent the people of Buderim in this place, but I would be disingenuous if I did not admit that the long absences from my young family were not hard. I take solace in the fact that hopefully I am making the world that Lara, Alex and Ella live in a better place.

I will change pace now. With the huge population growth the Sunshine Coast is experiencing—

Mr Minnikin: Bag Labor.

Mr MICKELBERG: That is right—our region is bearing the brunt of Labor's failure to plan and of Labor's failure to invest in key infrastructure like the roads and public transport that our community needs. Every day Sunshine Coast residents waste long hours sitting in traffic on the Sunshine Motorway.

Projects like upgrades to the Sunshine Motorway have been stalled for years. The state government's go slow on the Mooloolah River interchange has put a brake on the Sunshine Coast economy and on our community as a whole. There is barely a week that goes by when the stretch of the Sunshine Motorway at Mountain Creek in my electorate is not closed because of a serious accident. The time has long since passed for the state government to resolve the bottleneck that is the Mooloolah River interchange. Sunshine Coast residents deserve a funding commitment so that construction can start soon. More delays will only result in more lives lost and more congestion.

The Mooloolah River interchange is just one of many roads that the people of my electorate want to see fixed. One welcome commitment was the \$10 million upgrade to the Sugar Road-Mooloolaba Road interchange which the government committed to in this year's budget. Upgrading this dangerous and congested Sugar Road-Mooloolaba Road intersection is something I have been campaigning on since before I was elected in 2017. Each day 20,000 vehicles travel through the Sugar Road-Mooloolaba Road intersection, and the resultant congestion at the intersection adds considerable trip time for locals. I acknowledge and appreciate that the Minister for Transport and Main Roads took the time to meet with me on site.