




Speech By
Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE

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ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (6.03 pm): It is just over one year since that final day of October 2020—the date of the 2020 state election—and I still remember that feeling of that memorable night: a feeling of pride and honour, of gratitude and the responsibility bestowed on me, a responsibility created by the trust my local community had once again shown in the Palaszczuk Labor government. The result of the 2020 state election also bestowed a great honour upon me—the ability to represent the people of the Woodridge electorate for another four years.

When the people of Woodridge and the people of Queensland made their decision at the ballot box a little over one year ago, it felt like life in Australia might be heading back to normal. We had held the COVID-19 virus at bay. Just days before our election, Victoria had lifted its second-wave lockdown. Sadly, that was not to be. Prime Minister Scott Morrison's failure to acquire enough vaccine and his failure to build proper quarantine facilities gave the dangerous COVID-19 delta variant the chance it needed. Long lockdowns in the southern states ensued but thankfully, with the exception of a handful of short, sharp lockdowns, our state has avoided the damaging and destructive outcomes seen in other states. That is to the very great credit of the people of Woodridge and the people of Queensland who have done everything we have asked of them to keep our state safe.

But now we have one more request, one more ask, one more challenge, and that is to get vaccinated—for Queenslanders to get vaccinated in numbers so great that we can protect all of our fellow citizens, especially the most vulnerable. By 17 December, our borders will be open once again to southern states and our borders will be open to the dangerous delta variant. The virus will come to Queensland. The virus will be here. The only way we can protect ourselves, the only way we can protect Logan, the only way we can protect Queensland is to get vaccinated, which is why I am so pleased the COVID-19 vaccination rates in the electorate of Woodridge and the City of Logan have improved significantly. The latest vaccination rates in Logan show that the city's first-dose vaccination rate now stands at 80.1 per cent, with double-dose vaccination being 64.7 per cent. This is a 10 per cent improvement in single-dose vaccination and a 12 per cent improvement in double-dose vaccination in just over a two-week period.

While we still have more work to do, this is an outstanding result. I want to pay tribute today to every citizen in the City of Logan and every citizen in the electorate of Woodridge who has been vaccinated. Those citizens have rolled up their sleeves and have taken action to protect themselves, their family and our community from the potentially deadly and economically destructive impact of the COVID-19 virus.

In the past few years, the Woodridge electorate has changed shape and continues to evolve. More people are saying yes to Woodridge as the place to put down roots, to find work and to start a family. Even though the history and heritage of Logan's First Nations people, who I acknowledge here today, spans tens of thousands of years, we are still a young community. The average age of residents is just 30 years. That youthful outlook brings with it aspiration and optimism for the future. Nowhere is this more clearly seen than in our primary and secondary schools. Young minds are being nurtured by

some of the best teachers and principals in the nation. On the border of the Woodridge electorate, you will find Australia's best secondary school, Marsden State High School, and the country's top public school principal, Andrew Peach.

This new era for the Woodridge electorate is part of a significant growth phase for Queensland. Our lifestyle is attracting record numbers of interstate migrants to our state—new Queenslanders who are proud to call Queensland home—and we welcome these new Queenslanders with open arms. We know that the Sunshine State is the place to be.

The real strength of the community that I serve lies of course in its diversity. Woodridge is a snapshot of all that is great about our state and nation. The diversity in heritage and culture provides endless opportunities to learn, to connect and to understand. In our City of Logan you will meet Queenslanders representing 240 nationalities and ethnicities. We are one of Australia's most multicultural cities, and this is a badge of honour we wear with pride.

We are also a caring community. During the pandemic we saw that in spades. In Woodridge and the wider Logan region, our community groups stepped up to help others—organisations like YFS, Access Community Services, Multilink, Meals on Wheels and Substation33. The benefits of the services they provide come in many forms—health and wellbeing, inclusion, friendship and employment. For our part, the Palaszczuk Labor government will keep backing Logan. In Logan, we are witnessing the delivery of the \$500 million expansion of Logan Hospital and programs to air-condition every classroom in our state schools.

We are also making sure affordable housing is available to more Queenslanders. Since 2017, our government has built around 2,800 new social homes for Queenslanders, creating work for thousands of tradies along the way. These sorts of investments, including record funding in the 2021-22 state budget for social and affordable housing, are only made possible by ensuring the financial position of the state remains strong.

When I took on the role of Treasurer in May last year, during the worst economic crisis of our lifetime, I knew that we had to invest to protect Queenslanders but we had to make sure every dollar mattered. Not long after I became Treasurer I told the story of the first pay packet I received as a young man back in 1982. It was an envelope that contained the first \$2 that I ever earned—a pay packet and \$2 that I still keep today. Every day when I walk into my office I am reminded of my responsibilities by a plaque hanging on the wall that reads 'Other people's money'. It is paraphrased from something my late father would always tell me: 'It is not the government's money; it belongs to the people'—the people who elected people like me, who work hard, who pay their taxes, who expect the best possible response and services from government. We must always use their money wisely.

Our Unite and Recover COVID-19 Economic Recovery Plan is focused on them—on good, secure jobs, backing industry, backing small business and safeguarding the health of Queenslanders. This is the core policy platform we took to the last election and, as the results show, it resonated strongly with the people of Queensland. With uncertainty swirling on a global scale, our government's strength and stability stood out like beacons of hope and possibility.

In the last state election, Queenslanders told us that they wanted strong borders and strong decisions to protect their lives and livelihoods. They did not want to be dictated to by southern governments, including the federal LNP coalition government. While the LNP—in fact, every registered political party in this state—could not even bother to campaign in Woodridge during the 2020 state election, our government will never take electorates like Woodridge for granted. Equality, opportunity, respect, dignity in work: these are Labor values and they are values of the Woodridge electorate as well.

As I stand in the House to deliver this speech I speak as the voice of my community, and members of my community and a strong local Labor team worked so very hard to secure my re-election. Their efforts and belief made an enormous difference. I acknowledge and thank them today.

I take the opportunity to thank my campaign manager, Jon Raven, who steered the ship admirably once again, and the other true believers who supported me including Kelvin Nicholls, Malcolm Catchpole, John Wood, Tari Dambo, Fardos Yusuf, Teresa Lane, Phoenix Potoi, Izzy Harmer, Alison Liddell and Mindy Russell, along with so many others. In particular I acknowledge rank-and-file members of trade unions and leaders of trade unions. Trade unions play such a special and important role in our Queensland state and in our economy. I want to thank them for everything they do for working men and women in this state and everything they did to give me support.

I would also like to give special thanks to my hardworking electorate officers, Peter Wood and Mel Wong, who do an extraordinary job working so hard for the people of Woodridge. I see myself as working with them. We are a team to serve and look after our community, and I want to particularly

acknowledge them this evening. I, of course, want to acknowledge my family—my wife, Therese, and my sons, Samuel and Jonathan—who have been with me on a long and interesting journey every step of the way.

Now it is time for the Sunrise State to rise higher than ever before. COVID-19 may have bruised us, but we are coming back better, stronger and full of hope. Of course, as always, that starts locally. The strength, the fortitude, the resilience and the kindness we all witnessed during the pandemic in Woodridge, in Logan and across Queensland will not be short-lived. Be assured, I will be using this four-year term to give back to my community as much as it gives to me, because it continues to be the greatest privilege of my life to represent the Woodridge electorate in this parliament.