




Speech By  
**Corrine McMillan**

**MEMBER FOR MANSFIELD**

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Record of Proceedings, 11 March 2021

**ADDRESS-IN-REPLY**

 **Ms McMILLAN** (Mansfield—ALP) (4.38 pm): I rise to respond to His Excellency the Governor's opening speech of the 57th Parliament. I extend to the Speaker my warm congratulations on his re-election as Speaker of the House. I am confident that he will continue to preside over the deliberations in this chamber with wisdom, forbearance and respect for the time honoured conventions that have served this parliament so well in the past.

I acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which this historic building stands. In particular I acknowledge three great parliamentary colleagues: the member for Algeester, the member for Bundamba and the member for Cook. Every decision has consequences, and lifting outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples should be at the forefront of every decision we in this place make. We must continue to strive to ensure that the decision-makers in this place collectively reflect more accurately the diversity of the communities that we serve. The perspectives of our First Nations people, women and our multicultural community must be considered. This house of democracy must move to be even more representative of the progressive Queensland that we now serve.

I am proud to stand with the Palaszczuk Labor government, which is progressive, committed to affirmative action and progressing the interests of women in our Queensland community. As women on this side of the chamber, we will challenge traditional understandings of leadership. We will approach complex issues such as coercive control, consent, the decision-making of our young people and domestic violence differently—all factors affecting our future economic and social prosperity—and we will forge a new discourse. I trust that the legacy of this 57th Parliament will stand to credit us all for years to come and will inspire the dreams and journeys of future generations of Queensland's men and women.

I congratulate all new members of this House on both sides. I congratulate my parliamentary Labor colleagues, and in particular the Premier, the Deputy Premier and the ministers, on achieving majority government. Contest is a vital part of our democracy but there is also much to be said for stability, especially during the greatest health pandemic since the Spanish flu, which peaked in the autumn months of 1918.

My electorate of Mansfield acknowledges the graciousness, integrity and decisive leadership of our Premier. In our Premier my community feel trust, adoration, admiration and steadfastness. It was during my time as principal of Glenala State High School that I first met the honourable member for Inala, now the Premier of Queensland. I admired her ability to lead a complex community intelligently and respectfully. She saw the good in its people and took every avenue available to her to knowledgeably improve people's lives. My community of Mansfield identifies similarly. The Premier continues to lead Queensland with the same grace, dignity, integrity and steadfastness that I first recognised in 2011.

COVID-19 has claimed many lives worldwide. To be precise, to date 2.6 million people have lost their lives, 909 of whom were Australians. With every challenge there also comes an opportunity, including an opportunity to invest. Today governments must invest as evidenced by the research of the

OECD and the advice of the International Monetary Fund and the Governor of the Reserve Bank of Australia. Our strong health response in Queensland has ensured the foundations for the best possible economic recovery, that is, the opportunity for our government to borrow to invest for job creation. The greatest investment any government can make is in the people they serve.

Invest is what this Palaszczuk government has done, especially in my community of Mansfield. When I was elected to this parliament I vowed that I would strive to ensure that the Mansfield electorate became a hub of educational excellence. Every month more than 100 young families move to my electorate to access quality education. I know that a hub of educational excellence requires world-class infrastructure. It requires the resources and funding to inspire learning as well as effective teachers and strong educational leaders who apply explicit and precise strategies to improve student learning. It requires educators who teach their students how to think critically and creatively to identify future problems and opportunities, who inspire student confidence to apply complex and sophisticated formula, and who work together to ensure that the sum of the whole is greater than the sum of us as collective individuals. That is what such an educational hub should be.

What it should not be is a restrictive application of punitive measures that return our education system to an industrialised model of a bygone era nor the decluttering of the curriculum to facilitate a back-to-basics approach. And it is certainly not the blind pursuit of some self-acclaimed heroic budget surplus while neglecting to build one new classroom across Queensland in three years. That is what was on offer from the LNP and what happened under the LNP last time they held office.

A quality education transforms the lives of individuals, families and whole communities. We are delivering a \$39 million investment in new modern school facilities in Mansfield. The funding is included in the \$1 billion Great Schools Great Future education policy to modernise schools and support 3,100 local construction jobs across Queensland. That includes new classrooms at Mackenzie and Rochedale state schools and a new \$8.8 million building to replace the classrooms lost in the fire at Upper Mount Gravatt State School as well as a \$500,000 outdoor play area. To cater for continued growth in enrolments, my election commitment also includes \$6.74 million for new classrooms and a canteen at Wishart State School. Mansfield State School is receiving \$12.41 million to provide a new building of classrooms and a refurbished music block. Mansfield State High School will get a new \$29 million classroom building and Rochedale State High School will get a new \$12 million hall. We are also on track to deliver air conditioning for all staff rooms, classrooms and libraries as part of the \$477 million Cooler Cleaner Schools Program.

I am proud to have secured a \$500,000 commitment to begin the priority safety upgrade to Ham Road for Mansfield state primary and high schools. We expect that that funding will be matched by the Brisbane City Council under the local road improvement program. We will employ more than 6,100 new teachers and 1,100 new teacher aides over the next four years. The Palaszczuk government has a clear vision for education in Queensland. Education is the best investment that we can make for the future of Queenslanders and for the future prosperity of our great state. It is also pleasing to see a strong commitment by the Palaszczuk government to provide free TAFE to Queenslanders aged under 25. That is welcomed and will be valued immensely by the young people in my community.

We are keeping Queenslanders safe. The Palaszczuk Labor government will deliver an extra 2,025 police personnel—125 in the Brisbane south region over the next five years. The delivery of seven satellite hospitals—one in Brisbane south—will enable our acute hospitals to continue to safely manage patients via alternative models of care and is worth \$265 million. Recently I joined the former minister for health and the Chief Health Officer to announce a \$12 million investment to establish a 24-bed ward at the QEII Jubilee Hospital. That is what Labor governments do and that is exactly what the people of Queensland elected Labor to do.

Social isolation and loneliness is a well-documented and researched New World issue that was identified prior to the pandemic but which has been exacerbated since COVID-19. Since my election in 2017, I have worked closely with the University of Queensland's schools of psychology and sociology, the Mount Gravatt Community Centre and the Queensland Community Alliance to proactively address that important issue in my community. The employment of social workers, known as link workers, as part of our Ways to Wellness program has attracted ongoing committed funding of a further \$124,000 of \$498,356 by the Palaszczuk government. I am proud of that program, the international interest it has attracted and the significant outcomes achieved to date for our local people. An \$18.9 million investment across Queensland neighbourhood centres will further enable CEO Deb Crompton at the Mount Gravatt Community Centre to continue their tremendous work supporting our most vulnerable.

Small businesses play an important role in my community. Our strong health response has meant that we can get back to business as usual. Some 177 of the small businesses in my electorate have received Palaszczuk COVID-19 adaptation grants, totalling \$1.8 million.

Thanks to the great work of Queenslanders under the stewardship of the Palaszczuk Labor government, the Chief Health Officer, Dr Jeannette Young, and her incredible team, our community groups can enjoy the activities and friendships that we all cherished preCOVID. There are over 60 community groups that provide all types of activities across the Mansfield electorate, driven by passionate workers and volunteers. They include: the Brisbane Orchid Society, of which I am the proud patron and which is holding its 27th annual orchid show on 22 and 23 May; Gertrude Petty Place Bushcare group, led by fellow Sheamus O'Connor, a fellow educator; the Fiji Senior Citizens Association of Queensland, led by Surendra Prasad; the Greek Orthodox parish community; the Inner Wheel Club of Wishart; Mackenzie Neighbourhood Watch; the Mount Gravatt Environment Group, led by Michael Fox; the Mount Gravatt Lapidary Society, led by Jim and Tina Horton; the Mount Gravatt Meals on Wheels, led by Carmel Trew; the Rotary Club of Wishart, led by Sue Ellis; St Bernard's and St Catherine's Catholic parish, led by Father Pat, Debbie James and the team; the Genealogical Society of Queensland, led by a past colleague Helen Veivers; Southside Community Care; and the Wishart Community Hub, led by Jim Renshaw.

Great sporting clubs abound: the Australian Academy of Martial Arts Karate-Do Club, Clairvaux Football Club, Easts Mount Gravatt Junior Rugby League Football Club, Mount Gravatt Hawks, Mount Gravatt Little Athletics and the Mount Gravatt Vultures Football Club, to name a few. The Gambling Community Benefit Fund provided \$759,000 to 40 local community, service and sporting groups in my electorate for much needed resources.

In my second term as the member for Mansfield I am proud to deliver the following election commitments: \$1.5 million for the stage 2 development of the Mount Gravatt Youth and Recreational Club Sports Complex, \$92,000 for the Rochedale Scout Group, \$50,000 for the Mount Gravatt Men's Shed, \$70,000 for the Mount Gravatt Vultures Australian Football Club, and \$90,000 for the Mount Gravatt Hawks Football Club.

Like other relatively new members of this chamber, I find myself in this House because the good people of my electorate have placed their faith in me to represent them. I do not take this for granted and I intend to continue to spend every day as the local member representing their interests, both in this place and in the wider community.

Some 34,401 constituents and 18,326 households call the suburbs from Mount Gravatt in the north-west across to Burbank in the east and down to Rochedale in the south home. Mansfield has largely been populated with urban residential development. Significant gentrification is abundant. The concerns, interests and hopes of my constituents are not dissimilar to those experienced in other capital city electorates. The decisions that are made by governments of all levels are felt in communities like mine, and decisions made with care, respect and foresight are what the people of Mansfield ask of those they select to represent them.

My community are discerning. They have demonstrated discretion and decisiveness. They analysed the candidates. They clearly determined what was on offer. My community refused to be hoodwinked by propaganda or the LNP's fabricated ideology that is so far removed from what Queenslanders want. They were disgusted with some of the antics and tactics, including the non-means-tested \$300 off vehicle registration, in your bank account by Christmas, costing Queenslanders \$1 billion. Neither the bunny-suited young woman and the young man dressed as Spider-Man at Saturday morning street stalls nor the truck that displayed a dead foetus circling our community for months prior to the election, for all of our children to see, in any way contributed to the edification of the electorate. This is not what my community wants.

Best described as middle-class aspirational, Mansfield is an area that many families have chosen because of the lifestyle it offers: excellent access to high-quality health services, good public transport and an abundance of recreational facilities. We are proudly multicultural, with almost one-third of all residents in the electorate having been born overseas—and we are all the richer for it.

The Mansfield community is an intelligent and sophisticated community. En masse they are highly educated and employed. We are a community that pride ourselves on integrity and strong humanitarian values. My community have a strong commitment to social justice. They have a sophisticated view of the world with clear understandings of the complexities of poverty, disadvantage, opportunity and luck. They understand that only a Labor government provides the opportunities for them and for their children to get ahead. The community could see the recent campaign by those opposite as essentially just window-dressing, with not much depth. They overwhelmingly rejected any alignment with the ultraconservative ideology which does not reflect the majority of views in the community.

We are a very diverse and multicultural community with a spectrum of faiths, backgrounds and beliefs. Many members of my community come from countries where they did not have the opportunity to vote, especially women. My community acknowledged that the LNP were not going to be accepting

of their diversity. In my community of Mansfield, our faith and religion and how we vote are deeply private matters and are to be treated with respect. There is an overwhelming belief that there must be separation of state and religion to preserve our democracy and independence. I guess this is one of the hallmarks of being educated. There is a mutual respect to defend the right to faith but to embrace tolerance.

The older members in the Mansfield electorate did not feel safe with the LNP, their continued indecision and vacillating on how best to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. They wanted steady leadership displayed by both me and our Premier, and the figures speak for themselves. At the 2020 election, an increase of 6.75 per cent in first preferences went to Labor compared to the 2017 election, with a primary vote of 46.14 per cent and a distributed preference count of 56.8 per cent, up 10.6 per cent from 2017.

Progress is inevitable. It is the thoughtful management of change that makes a difference to people's lives. There can be no doubt that a diversity of real-world experience enriches the perspectives of any elected official and helps one to better understand the needs, aspirations, frustrations and fears of the constituency they represent. Real-world experience tells one to tread thoughtfully, to ask questions in order to critique and to better understand, to listen, to resist punitive measures in response to complex matters, to act discerningly, to consider consequences, to appreciate the impacts on real people.

My experiences position me strongly to support the needs of my schools and to respond to the aspirations of my families. Public education is the pillar of our democracy. It is the only medium to progress greater equality for all Queenslanders, regardless of one's birthplace, nationality, disability, religion, socio-economic status or gender. My community knows who values education, not from slogans but from the policies, investment and decisions that we see when a Labor government is in office and when a local member genuinely believes in the children, their families and the community they serve.

My re-election would not be possible without the amazing team of tireless workers and volunteers who supported me in the years and months leading up to the election of a third consecutive Labor government on 31 October 2020. Together we made over 42,000 phone calls, over 14,000 doorknocks and 28,000 interactions with our community. I would like to thank my fearless and considered campaign director, Sarah Mawhinney, who orchestrated a sensational campaign. Sarah has a brilliant political mind. She is a remarkable woman and a great mentor to young women in the Australian Labor Party. Her precision, strategic focus and drive kept our team on track and on target to win.

There are so many people I wish to thank: assistant campaign director Stephanie Kameric; Mansfield branch president Adam; secretary and dear friend Dr Shane Warren; treasurer Ben; another of my dear friends Tricia Ryan, a Labor true believer—a former nun whose inner peace is infectious and who was by my side every step of the campaign; present and past staff of my office; the McMillan team of Steve and Kathy Pain, Annie, Stephen, Col, Katie, Abdul 'Papa', Mona, Emily, Jayne, Marilyn, Gary, Neida, Ann, Mary, former colleagues, and everyone on pre-poll and at polling day booths.

I thank our Queensland Young Labor team. Our Australian Labor Party is in great hands when we look at the qualities of the young people coming through our party.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the Speaker has reviewed and approved my address-in-reply speech for incorporation and, as such, I ask that the remainder of my speech be incorporated into the *Record of Proceedings*.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Krause): Member for Mansfield, given that you spoke for 20 minutes, I will have to take advice and come back to you.