




Speech By  
**Hon. Craig Crawford**

**MEMBER FOR BARRON RIVER**

---

Record of Proceedings, 11 March 2021

**ADDRESS-IN-REPLY**

 **Hon. CD CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (12.49 pm): I want to begin my speech on the address-in-reply by acknowledging traditional owners past and present, not just here in Brisbane but across the vast land of Queensland. I pay my respects to elders past, present and emerging and thank them for up to 60,000 years of custodianship of the lands, winds and waters that we now all share.

I begin by congratulating all returning members to this House, as well as congratulating those new members who have joined us in this most amazing building doing this most incredible job in all of our various patches. I also acknowledge those members who were defeated at the election and those members who retired. In a very bipartisan way, we all leave this place at some point. Sometimes we make that call ourselves; sometimes about 30,000 people make that call for us—but we all leave this place, and all of us here will forever have our name on the wall outside this chamber. If there is one bipartisan thing we can do, it is to recognise those who are no longer here who have moved on. Some may even come back—who knows.

During the recent election campaign, in my electorate of Barron River it was hot. It was hot and it was long, and it was hot and long for everyone. I want to recognise those people not only from my team but also from the other teams. They were very trying conditions up there in the north. Mother Nature gave us about 30 straight days of hot sunshine with mid-30-degree temperatures. There was a lot of dehydrated campaign workers wearing all coloured shirts out there on the hustings. I thank my campaign workers, my volunteers, my EO staff—Susan, Aaron and Katie—for the fantastic work they did. I thank my branch members and supporters, particularly my wife, Rosie, who was my campaign manager and did not back down on me at all I have to say.

I am now in my third term and there are a few areas in my electorate that I want to cover. Roads, education and the environment are certainly the big key areas in the patch of Barron River. We are currently seeing the Smithfield Bypass nearing completion—that \$164 million project will open towards the end of the year. That will be quite symbolic for motorists on the northern beaches as they try to get in and out of Cairns. We are also about to see significant works start on the Captain Cook Highway. That is a combined federal-state project. That will start to draw closer to commencement.

We also have significant works happening on the Cairns Western Arterial Road. For those members who are not from Cairns or the northern beaches of Cairns, you cannot get from Cairns to Port Douglas or to Palm Cove or to Kuranda or to Mareeba without going on any of those arterial roads. They are under incredible pressure and they have been for some time. I want to acknowledge the main roads minister, who has been working very closely with me on getting projects up and moving along.

When it comes to education in Barron River, like all electorates we have growing areas. We have more young families and more people moving in. Growing populations of schools is a significant pressure. I want to acknowledge the current education minister and previous education ministers for

working with me on getting the infrastructure that we need into those schools. That is running well. We currently have around four large-scale infrastructure developments occurring in schools in my electorate. That will be great for the staff and also for the kids.

The environment in Barron River has and always will be a significant pressure point. Barron River is jammed between two World Heritage areas of the Great Barrier Reef and the Wet Tropics, with a tourism overlay as well. With cassowaries, crocodiles, flying foxes, wallabies and a range of other animals, the protection of habitat and the intersections between mankind and animals will always be an issue.

One issue that we have up there at the moment that I am working with Minister Bailey on is how we manage cassowary movement and highways. It is a good story. In the past few years we have seen what appears to be a fairly significant return of the cassowary population. That is good to see. I lived up in that patch for about 10 years before I saw my first cassowary in the wild. I think in the last six months I have seen about four or five randomly on the side of the road and that sort of thing, so the population is coming back. However, it does create issues because they are not really road friendly. We are now seeing more cassowaries—

**Mr Hinchliffe** interjected.

**Mr CRAWFORD:** You probably do not want them in your backyard, member for Sandgate. Cassowaries do come across cars and cars come across them, and it is not a very good outcome. There is work underway by Main Roads—and we want to keep that work happening—trying to make sure that cassowaries can cross the roads, whether via overpasses, underpasses or whatever. That issue certainly needs to be built into the planning stages of our highways.

I also want to acknowledge the tourism workers and the companies in Cairns and Far North Queensland at the moment who have been doing it very tough for some time. They are holding on well. They have dug in well. Those companies that could adapt to domestic tourism have done it very well. As has been mentioned in this House many times in the last couple of days, there are companies and workforces who are specifically designed and marketed towards international tourism, and some of those have not been able to adapt simply because of the make-up of their business. I, like the Premier, have very much supported the position on the international borders. We certainly recognise that there are workers and companies out there who are doing it tough.

From a ministerial perspective, I am honoured to be the Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships. This is a people based portfolio representing some of the most vulnerable and inspiring Queenslanders. We are dealing with human beings who are trying to access and leverage the system to achieve their rights, goals, dreams and aspirations. I am conscious of how the work that I do in this ministerial portfolio matters to seniors, to people with disability and to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders, and I intend to work to achieve cooperation within government and with community to ensure meaningful outcomes for these Queenslanders. It is so important that in our dealings with these Queenslanders we endeavour to improve their quality of life and support them to achieve their aspirations and to contribute to the communities in which they live.

Our seniors and elders are our connection to history. They should be valued, respected and protected. The saying 'we should respect our elders' comes to mind when we think about our work over the next four years. Our seniors and elders hold invaluable knowledge, and we should all take every opportunity that we can to learn from them. We should also recognise the informal contributions they make to our community—caring for grandchildren, providing child care, supporting young people and their families living at home and, of course, there are many who rely on the bank of mum and dad.

For those Queenslanders who live with disability, we need to focus on, promote and encourage their abilities and the contribution they make to our state, as well as ensuring they have access to the supports and services they require to have fulfilling lives. We have commenced work on the next state disability plan called All Abilities Queensland and are working with the federal government on the next National Disability Strategy. Queenslanders with a disability have many stories—some about the challenges they face but many are inspiring stories of strength and resilience that can inform and influence change.


We are working with federal, state and territory disability ministers to ensure the continuation of 'choice and control' in the NDIS for reasonable and necessary supports and services. We know there is still work to be done in the market development for NDIS services in Queensland, particularly in regional and remote communities and in some urban areas, and we are engaging at all levels to increase access.

We are committed to ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are empowered to determine their own destinies and achieve their dreams through being involved in decisions that affect them. The Queensland government is committed to a reframed relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders—and this is demonstrated by our work on Path to Treaty, our commitment to closing the gap in the levels of disadvantage faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and our initiatives supporting them to reach their full potential and achieve their goals.

While my department does not deliver the majority of Indigenous programs across government, they can support the successful delivery of them. It is so important that we respect the cultural authority held within our communities and our elders, and ensure that the work we do is informed by and aligned with the principles and rights outlined in the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The patience and graciousness of First Nations people should not be taken for granted. I want to acknowledge Ken Wyatt, the federal Indigenous affairs minister, and the work we have done with him. I get along very well with Ken. He is an exceptional human being. We have been working closely with him on closing the gap, on treaty, on voice, on cultural heritage and on a number of things.

---

 **Hon. CD CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (3.08 pm), continuing: When it comes to seniors, people with disability and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, I look forward to working with those three inspiring and important groups of Queenslanders to deliver real and meaningful outcomes for them as individuals and for the communities in which they live.

In conclusion, I wish to quote the *Hansard* of this House and a speech of Mr Andrew Petrie MP. Andrew Petrie was the son of Mr John Petrie, who was well known for being involved in the early establishment of the City of Brisbane. He was the first mayor of the city. John Petrie contributed to the construction supply chain for the very building that we stand in. His son Andrew Petrie was the member for Toombul. In 1897, during the second reading speech on the Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Bill, he said—

I have always felt that our Aboriginals have been very badly treated; that while we have come here and taken their land we have allowed them to mix with whites and adopt their vices and evil habits.

Some 125 years on I believe that Mr Petrie would agree with me when I say that this always was and always will be Aboriginal land.