




Speech By
Daniel Purdie

MEMBER FOR NINDERRY

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ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

 **Mr PURDIE** (Ninderry—LNP) (11.16 am): I acknowledge His Excellency the Governor in opening the 57th Parliament of Queensland. It is an honour to have been returned as the member for Ninderry for a second term. I would like to acknowledge all those members on both sides of the House who have been re-elected by their communities, and I welcome all those new members who have been given the great privilege to serve in this House. I would also like to pay tribute to those hardworking representatives who were not returned at the recent election—in particular, my close friends and colleagues, the former member for Bundaberg, Dave Batt, and the former member for Nicklin, Marty Hunt. They were no doubt two of the hardest working members and both represented their communities with humility, passion and integrity. They will be sorely missed. However, I wish the incoming members all the very best. They have very big shoes to fill.

I want to thank our former leader, the member for Nanango, Deb Frecklington, for her courage, dignity, honour and tireless energy. She has been a proud and strong voice for our party, our values and Queensland. She was ably assisted by former deputy leader, Tim Mander. I know that both Deb and Tim will continue to serve their communities with that same passion and energy. I also acknowledge our leader, Dave Crisafulli, and deputy leader, David Janetzki, whose vision and guidance will be instrumental in holding the Palaszczuk government to account. They will give Queenslanders the confidence that a future LNP government will repair the damage of a generation of Labor rule.

I want to do three things today: I want to thank my electorate and those within it who have helped me deliver parts of our shared vision over the first three years in this place; I want to talk about the local things, the sometimes small things that add up to real changes in the lives of our local residents; and I want to talk about the big things, the statewide issues I am passionate about, and how those opposite have failed to listen to our warnings and our advice for making this state better.

I want to thank the electorate of Ninderry and my local community for their support. I am humbled to have earned the trust of the electorate and I vow to continue to work hard every day to deliver on those local issues and priorities. My journey to re-election has been supported by a wonderful campaign team—an amazing group of party members, friends and volunteers. I want to pass on my sincere thanks to my campaign manager, the former member for Mansfield, Frank Carroll, and the rest of my campaign team, including Tony Philbrick, Tony Northey, Lance Barrett and the amazing Jenny Somalyay. Words cannot express my gratitude. They headed up a strong, positive campaign that focused on local issues and our track record. Joining them once again were a dedicated group of friends and supporters—too many to name individually—who did the hard yards, not only in the lead-up to the election but also dutifully throughout the past three years. Whatever the reason, whenever the time, I know I can rely on every single one of my team of supporters to back me, to counsel me, to hold me to account or to take me to task when needed.

I cannot continue without also paying tribute to those who gave me the inspiration and the motivation more than three years ago to make the shift from policing to politics. My wife, Andrea, and our two daughters, Emelia and Chloe, are a big reason why I am here and the reason I remain

committed and passionate about serving our community and trying to ensure all Queenslanders can live in a safe and prosperous society. As I have said before in this House, while we may volunteer to become members of parliament, our families are conscripts. They did not put their hand up for this job, but my family have been unwavering in their support and love. For that, I owe it to them to continue to represent our community and to fight for those things we remain passionate about to the absolute best of my ability.

I would also like to place on the record that I appreciate how lucky I am to have the two best electorate staff in the state—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr PURDIE:—arguably. Kate and Kylie with the assistance of Cherie work tirelessly, mainly just trying to keep me on task, but they work equally as hard for every constituent who calls the office needing assistance. As I reflect on the past three years and those priorities that I listed in my maiden speech, I am proud of what we have been able to achieve for our electorate.

All politics is local. Fundamentally, our role in this place is to improve the lives of those we are elected to represent. What I am about to say may not be of interest to those listening in this chamber, but it is important to the residents of Ninderry and the Sunshine Coast. Over the past three and a bit years across the electorate we have secured over \$250 million in infrastructure upgrades, \$23 million for local schools, more police and a new police station at Coolum, funding for a new pedestrian bridge at Eumundi and over a million dollars in grants and sponsorship for local community groups and sporting clubs.

After three years of lobbying the government, during the election I welcomed Labor's acknowledgement of long overdue road infrastructure projects, including the duplication of the Sunshine Motorway, and supporting our plan to bust congestion in Coolum by upgrading the Yandina Coolum Road interchange and construction of a new pedestrian bridge at Seib Road. I was particularly impressed during the campaign to see the local Labor campaign team waving placards and protesting at the Coolum roundabout, the same site I met the Minister for Transport almost 18 months ago. They were calling on their own Labor government to back our plan to bust congestion at Coolum. I look forward to seeing the funding for these critical announcements in this year's budget as do the thousands of motorists who get stuck in the congestion every single day.

Another road project that is overdue for an urgent safety upgrade is Yandina Coolum Road, a major thoroughfare that was last year listed by RACQ as one of the 10 worst roads in the state. My community and I have been consistently requesting urgent safety and maintenance repairs for over a year. Despite the long list of extensive issues such as increasing traffic numbers, line marking and condition of the road surface to name just a few, we have been repeatedly told that the condition of Yandina Coolum Road is not classified as a high priority for upgrades. I can attest to untold incidents of near misses, significant damage to vehicles, dangerous driving, poor conditions, congestion, broken windscreens and an overall increase in traffic and road noise. Surely we do not need to add a fatality to this list before the road receives the urgent upgrade required.

One of my proudest achievements to date was playing a small part in a community-led campaign calling on the government to appeal the weak sentence given to a drug driver who mowed down and killed well-known and much loved Coolum identity Sharon Cuthbert outside her family home in 2017. More than 8,000 people signed our petition seeking justice for Sharon. I have got to know Sharon's husband, Michael, well and I remain in awe of his strength of character and resolve. If I was in his shoes I do not honestly know how I could get out of bed every day. I applaud him not only for his courage and determination but also for being the amazing father he is to both Makayla and Shylah.

Another satisfying achievement, thanks to a community-led campaign, was securing funding for a new pedestrian bridge on Seib Road in Eumundi. Locals have been lobbying government for more than 20 years for safe pedestrian access over the North Maroochy River, which is why I made it one of my top priorities during my first term. It took years of negotiation with council colleagues and the minister, but it was worth every minute of every meeting and every letter to finally secure the joint funding required for this critical infrastructure project. It was even worth the embarrassment of riding my daughter's scooter across the bridge while wearing a GoPro on my head to get footage in order to show the minister the dire need for this bridge. I acknowledge the minister for taking the time to watch it and for not laughing at me too hard. I look forward to celebrating with the wider community when the first sod of this project is turned in the coming months.

Another key priority was to give our police a permanent home in a new station after they had spent more than a decade working out of a demountable. I made a commitment to my former colleagues and the community to hold the government to account to deliver the new station, which was finally

opened in September last year. It was another long battle but finally our local police have access to a future proofed, modern facility that will help them do their job of protecting and serving our local community.

I would also like to touch on some of the intangible highlights of the past three years such as the valuable relationships I have developed with a large number of individuals and community groups whose tireless efforts make such a tremendous difference in the lives of many across the electorate. I have mentioned many of those groups and individuals in this chamber over the past three years. I speak of groups like Coolum Meals on Wheels where volunteers help prepare around 20,000 meals annually for the frail and elderly in our community. Under the guidance of president Rob Cobb, this group, which last year celebrated its 35th anniversary, is fuelled by the dedication and commitment of its volunteers. My community is blessed to be served by these community champions.

Another group of local champions are the environmental warriors behind the Coolum and North Shore Coast Care, a not-for-profit organisation started about 30 years ago. The group's president, Leigh Warneminde, is now leading the charge in coordinating over 200 volunteers. I have joined them for events such as the World Environment Day when I rolled up my sleeves and joined a handful of volunteers who regularly dig out weeds on the dunes at the beach at Coolum. Not only do they weed the dunes, which I can say is harder work than I thought it would be, they also look after the turtle nests and pandanus trees and organise educational activities for kids. I enjoy taking my girls along to see some of the turtle digs during the season.

Coolum heARTS is another local group worthy of recognition in this House. The group was started by Coolum locals Clive and Barb Holden a number of years ago and provides a range of classes and weekly therapeutic sessions for the physically and mentally disabled in the community. Like many community groups and clubs, they have struggled this year with many of their activities put on hold and their fundraising efforts halted.

Another community group I do need to highlight is Bli Bli Neighbourhood Watch. It was started only five years ago by a community champion Edith Blank and is now an award-winning and one of the most successful Neighbourhood Watch groups in the country. They have raised and invested over \$600,000 back into the local community, the majority of which has been to raise awareness of, and support for, victims of domestic violence. They have also been strong advocates for all victims of crime and have loudly called for tougher laws to help police protect their community from criminals, particularly repeat juvenile offenders.

There are many more such groups but it would be nearly impossible to mention each and every one of them in the brief time I have available today. However, I want to acknowledge their efforts and recognise the role they all played. I am so proud of the sense of community spirit that thrives in Ninderry. Over the next four years I will continue to use an opportunity in this House to showcase their achievements.

All of us sit here and listen to ministers talk about the government's policies and their implementation. We cannot help but worry about how they impact their own electorate and the rest of the state. There are two areas that I have particular interest in: the government's poor record on crime and their fundamental lack of an economic strategy. I have said before and I will continue to say that over 20 years of policing has taught me three basic principles: our people must be protected, criminals must be punished and our police must be provided with what they need to get that job done. We need effective laws that enable police to find, arrest and convict criminals, and we need enough police to enforce these laws.

Since I entered this place, I and others have been warning the government that its soft-on-crime agenda and continued watering down of the youth justice laws would end in tears, and unfortunately it has. The proposed amendments announced recently are widely regarded by our frontline police and CPIU detectives as window dressing: amendments to legal definitions that do not make any change to the overall spirit of the legislation and do not give the police the powers they need do their job and keep the community safe. To properly protect our communities we need to protect the building blocks of those communities, our families. We must effectively protect our most vulnerable Queenslanders, our children. I have seen the aftermath of child sex abuse and the impact it has on victims, their families and our communities.

Last year I was approached by a group of parents in my electorate who were horrified to find that a convicted paedophile was not just living next to their children's school but was hosting kids' parties at his home. When they contacted the local police to report his suspicious behaviour, they were alarmed to learn that it is illegal for police to tell them or the school if he was a known high-risk paedophile.

Labor's current plan to protect the community from sex offenders is an honesty system. It relies on the honesty and integrity of upstanding, law-abiding paedophiles living in our community to report online any change in their circumstances such as that they are now living beside a school and hosting

pool parties for kids! This is not good enough. Queenslanders deserve better. They deserve a government that puts the rights of victims above criminals. We must believe that a safe and prosperous Queensland is achievable and foreseeable.

This year will be forever etched in our minds as the year our lives changed irrevocably. The COVID pandemic forced every single one of us not only to change our daily lives but also to re-evaluate our future. We have had to challenge the way we view the world and our place in it. While it has tested our resolve, I am sure I can speak on behalf of all my colleagues when I say that we have developed a whole new appreciation for where we live. The stories and images of the impact of COVID in other countries are a constant reminder of the swift action that our leaders took in managing the impact of this pandemic. I acknowledge the health response that kept Queenslanders safe, but now our focus must be squarely on the economic recovery. We must get Queensland working again.

Families have been decimated and businesses destroyed as a result of the health crisis. We must now do everything in our power to concentrate our efforts on rebuilding this great state and on restoring the jobs that have been lost. Unfortunately, Queensland was not in a healthy position before COVID struck, so the task ahead of us will be monumental. Queenslanders may have been hoodwinked by Labor's orchestrated scare campaign when they went to the polls last October but they are now demanding a vision for the future and a road map to economic recovery.

In closing, I want to reflect on my vision for the term ahead—a vision that has been shaped not only by the events of the past three years but also by the same priorities I outlined in my maiden speech. The two highest priorities of any government are the safety and security of its citizens and to provide an economic environment in which its citizens can prosper. On these highest priorities, Labor has failed Queenslanders. Being able to work without living in fear of being a victim of crime is paramount to the stability and growth of a civilised society. A flourishing economy is fundamental to our way of life. Under Labor, Queensland has failed miserably.

As I have said before, I want my girls and all our kids to grow up in a society where they do not live in fear of being a victim of crime. I want them to be able to enjoy our pristine environment and to surf at our stunning beaches. Most importantly, I want to see my daughters able to live the entirety of their lives in our beautiful region, to get a world-class education, to gain meaningful employment, to pursue a career and to start a family of their own should they wish to do so. I know that I am not alone in my vision for my family, my community and our state. I look forward to the next four years, working hard to deliver that vision and rebuild our once proud state.