




Speech By
Deb Frecklington

MEMBER FOR NANANGO

Record of Proceedings, 11 March 2021

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (3.09 pm): It is extremely humbling to be re-elected for a fourth term as the member for Nanango in this the 57th Parliament. I sincerely thank my community for putting their faith in me. There is just so much opportunity in my electorate of Nanango, and in fact across regional Queensland, but it needs backing with better roads, better health services and less red and green tape for our primary producers and our small businesses. That is what I will be working to achieve for my communities right across the South Burnett, Somerset, northern Toowoomba, Cherbourg and western Gympie regions. I will continue to work hard each and every day because I love my region, my area and all the incredible people who call that beautiful part of the world home.

There are many people to thank who ran the Nanango campaign. There are too many to name individually, but I must acknowledge their hard work and their dedication. Given my position, I was not able to be there very much. I wish to thank my—I was going to say ‘long-suffering’—campaign manager, Chris Andersen, and his incredible wife, Patricia. Patricia has been suffering a few medical conditions in the last couple of years, and Chris has just been wonderful.

To Jackie and John Allery and Riley and Gus but particularly Callum Allery, who, along with his mates, did some extra work this time: I thank you. Susan Mortimer and her husband, Peter, were incredible. I thank Col Kiem and all the booth captains. Then there was Zac and Andrew. I will only say their first names because they may work very closely to the government, but these two incredible young men took a full two weeks leave to work full-time on the Nanango campaign. They stood in the rain and endured so much, and I would not be standing here if it was not for all those people.

To Cath and Jules but particularly Lenny and Belinda from my Nanango office, I thank you. Belinda Pennell worked for me from day one in 2012 and then Lenny Hams joined me about a year later. These ladies are exceptional. Like every member of the House, I have incredible people who do so much for me on behalf of my community.

I also want to acknowledge a long-time supporter, Ian McAuley, and his wife, Di. Ian sadly passed away on 20 October 2020, not long before the election. Ian was such an incredible man. I want to thank him for his contribution to Queensland, but he was also such a great friend of my family. I very much would like to honour Ian and thank him for everything he did.

There are so many more to mention: Sean, Duncan, Kathy, John, Gil, David, Lorelle, Ian, Jeff and Jenny. I cannot do what the member for Glass House did and name them all; there are too many. I will get to my family in a moment, including my daughter Elke, who is a first-year uni student at QUT and who is sitting in the public gallery.

As the immediate former leader of the opposition, I congratulate the new leadership team on their important role. An opposition has a very important role in the Westminster system of government—that is, to hold the government to account. In this House, the members of the Labor Party often act in a way that reveals the arrogance of long-term government. They do not treat the members of the opposition or the crossbench in a manner that respects our constituents and the choice that our constituents have

made in electing us to our rightful spot in this House. It is a position that is afforded to so few. We have been elected on behalf of our constituents. I council members, particularly those who sit on the Labor backbench who yell out, 'That's why you lost,' or, 'That's why you don't deserve to be here,' to never forget that our constituents have elected us, just as their constituents elected them. We are here because of our constituents—each and every one of us. The way the government arrogantly dismisses our questions, including questions on notice, and our role in this place shows just how out of touch and how arrogant it has become.

It was indeed an honour to be entrusted by my colleagues with the position of leader of the opposition and to act in this role for the entire 56th Parliament. I would sincerely like to thank the member for Everton, Tim Mander, for his friendship and hard work during that whole term as the deputy leader of the opposition. I would like to thank the entire LNP team, who worked so extraordinarily hard over the past three years on behalf of Queensland.

I give a special mention to our retiring members: Mark McArdle, Ted Sorensen and Simone Wilson. I want to give a shout-out to David Batt in Bundaberg and Marty Hunt in Nicklin, who were such incredibly hardworking local members; they will be sorely missed. I would like to welcome and give a massive congratulations to Amanda Camm, the new member for Whitsunday, who has already become an invaluable member of our team.

In relation to the election, I back what the member for Everton said in his address-in-reply—so many others in this House, including Labor members, said it also—that it was a COVID election. Millions of dollars were spent on advertising, on 'unite and recover'—it has miraculously disappeared—right up until election day. My great mate the member for Glass House just this morning in this House delivered a quote from some time ago: 'In politics, what begins in fear usually ends in failure.' People can already see that it is going to end that way. The fear campaign that those opposite ran across the state of Queensland is quite simply incredible.

I touch on the phone canvassing, such as that which was shared with us by an older gentleman from Bribie Island in the seat of Pumicestone. It was a new low. He recorded the Labor phone canvassing into Bribie Island. It was said to him—

Under the Liberals' plan, people are going to die.

The elderly gentleman said—

Did you just say—did you just say under a Liberal government people will die? Is that what you just said to me?

The Labor phone canvasser said—

I just said under a Liberal government the borders will reopen and who knows what's going to happen from there ... people will die ...

Let me clarify one thing: we did call for the borders to reopen and the Premier opened the border. Then when the second wave happened in Victoria, I went on local Brisbane radio and said, 'The borders must be closed.' The next day, miraculously, the Premier then followed and closed the borders. This fear and dirtiness from the Labor government suits them. It is the politics of fear and it has certainly worked for them.

Labor were able to hide all their dirty laundry behind that fear of COVID. They were able to hide their integrity scandals and their failures. Let's remember that before COVID hit the government were besieged with integrity scandal after integrity scandal. I find it fascinating that the Premier has started this term with yet another integrity scandal, and her actions and responses show us that she believes she is above the Ministerial Handbook.

I am so proud of the influence that our team were able to have from opposition in the last term. We introduced seven private members' bills: Criminal Code (Choking in Domestic Settings) and Another Act Amendment Bill, Criminal Code (Trespass Offences) Amendment Bill, Criminal Code and Other Legislation (Mason Jett Lee) Amendment Bill, Criminal Code and Other Legislation (Ministerial Accountability) Amendment Bill, Electoral (Voter's Choice) Amendment Bill, Weapons and Other Legislation (Firearms Offences) Amendment Bill, and Protecting Queenslanders from Violent and Child Sex Offenders Amendment Bill.

We fought the vegetation laws and the reef regulations on behalf of our primary producers. We raised the issue around ice and the effect that insidious drug has on our communities and mental health. We pushed for air conditioning in classrooms across Queensland. We were ridiculed by the Labor government, but eventually they realised it was a very good idea and they adopted it. We lobbied for real-time fuel monitoring. We lobbied for rural maternity services to address the bush bubs crisis—a crisis that is still going on because those opposite do not understand that people in regional Queensland deserve the same representation as people who live in Brisbane.

I am particularly proud of the policies we developed in the domestic violence space. The tragic death of Hannah Clarke and her beautiful children rightfully sparked outrage. I knew it was time to take decisive action against domestic violence. We did act decisively. Within seven days of this tragedy I had announced a package of measures to strengthen Queensland's domestic violence laws. This is one area where I stood up and said, 'Let's put politics aside and let's do something.'

We talked about legislation to strengthen strangulation laws and increase sentences. We talked about introducing a new coercive control offence, laws to empower police to issue domestic violence orders on the spot, the rollout of GPS monitoring trials, more money for frontline not-for-profit agencies and emergency grants. I pleaded with the then Palaszczuk government saying that we did not need another inquiry, summit or review. However, nothing happened and our proposed legislation was ignored and left to lapse.

There is no doubt that the recent announcement by the Labor government is positive, and I have communicated that to the Attorney-General. We must ask why this was not done last term. Why has it taken the government and the new Attorney-General so long to act? No-one can imagine the terror and pain that Hannah and her children suffered in those final moments. Four beautiful lives were destroyed by an act of pure evil. More needs to be done, even now.

Fighting for water has always been one of the LNP's major platforms. We have the debacle of Paradise Dam—one of the worst infrastructure failures in Australia. While I said not too long ago in this House that Paradise Dam may be empty by June, it now looks like it will be empty by the end of this month if no rain falls in that catchment. I am passionate about water security and our regional areas. I was very pleased to be appointed the shadow minister for water and the construction of dams, regional development and manufacturing.

In relation to the commitments for my Nanango electorate, my plans remain firmly in place to fight for the services and infrastructure we so badly need, including: a new hall for Kilcoy State High School, which I think is going to happen; a full-time paediatrician for the South Burnett region; flashing lights for Kilkivan State School so kids can get to school safely; upgrades to the Kilkivan to Tansey Road, Bye Road, the much needed Maidenwell Bunya Mountain Road—I think I have talked about that at the beginning of every term—the Wivenhoe Pocket turning lane; the Barlil Weir; and, very importantly, a matter that the member for Lockyer and I have been talking about for several years, water security for the Somerset and Lockyer irrigators. We will continue to talk about that.

I will continue to advocate on behalf of my region for an improvement in the crime statistics and the security of people in and around the South Burnett. I thank our hardworking local police officers. They go above and beyond to look after my constituents and keep them safe. I can tell this House that many of my constituents are not safe and unfortunately do not feel safe.

I will continue to advocate for more and better health care. I know that the Palaszczuk government like to go on about the new Kingaroy Hospital. It is great, but what we need is services within those walls. It is wonderful to have a new building, even though it is \$12 million over budget and floods in summer rains. I think our CT scanner has broken. The maternity ward is already busted because of the rain. It was \$12 million over budget, but I am pleased to have the building.

What I want is support for the nurses, doctors and administration staff within that building. Over 80 shifts in the last little while have been short staffed. That came from the nurse who came up to me at the local butcher—a big shout-out to the little butcher in Kingaroy Shoppingworld—and told me she is an agency nurse. They were short staffed for the last 80 shifts. This is ongoing. There is no plan. There is no workforce plan in relation to this issue. We need better and healthier services for our regions.

I will continue to advocate on behalf of regional mums who choose to give birth in regional Queensland. I will continue to advocate for that, whether it is in Chinchilla or Theodore—no matter where it is. It does not matter that it is not in my electorate, but these women deserve to have some representation because those opposite continue to put out press release after press release and refuse to do anything. The member for Callide and I will continue to advocate for them. I am sure the member for Mudgeraba, as shadow minister for health, will continue to advocate on their behalf.

An electorate is made up of many people who contribute in their own way. There are a couple of people whom I want to acknowledge. One is Darryl 'Grumpy' Okely. Grumpy passed away in late 2020. Grumpy served in Vietnam with Whisky 6 Company, a New Zealand infantry company that was part of 4RAR, an Australian infantry battalion. There was not one event in the last six years at the Nanango RSL that Grumpy did not invite me to be at. On behalf of my whole community, I again pass on our condolences to Grumpy's wife, Mary. No event will ever be the same without Grumpy.

I acknowledge the passing of Paul Tunn. Paul was a long-term Yarraman resident who was part of Bomber Command in World War II. He was an airman. Vincent Paul Tunn died aged 97 in November 2019. In 2015 he was awarded the French Legion of Honour for risking his life for the liberation of

France. I used to go every year with Paul Tunn to the Yarraman cemetery service where I had the honour of reading out the names of those who passed from service and were buried in Yarraman. Each time at the end of reading out all those names Paul would say, 'My name is still not on the list, Deb.' It will be a really sad Anzac Day this year without Paul.

Our community cannot exist without incredible community events—and there are so many. I want to give a shout-out to an incredible community event, which is not in my electorate—Weengallon Pink Ladies Day. It is run by a committee of volunteers. Last year I had the pleasure of attending and helping its committee president, Emma Montgomery. Some 900 people attended. It has been going for 20 years. Last year they raised over \$60,000. Emma, who was 49, passed away last week from breast cancer. I pass on my condolences to her husband, Bill Montgomery. Emma was a devoted mum to Georgina, Annabel and Lily. There are so many young people in our communities who are faced with cancer and the effects of cancer. To Emma, we thank you for the service that you gave to the Queensland community. May you rest in peace.

I am only in this place because of my wonderful community, my incredible children and my amazing husband, Jason. Jason, Isabella, Lucy and Elke are seriously the most unreal people—thank you. I know each and every one of us has stories about our families. It is the passing of someone like Emma that makes you really sit up and appreciate your children and your family. To my family, to my mum and dad and my siblings and my husband's mum and dad and his siblings, thank you all so very much.

In my maiden speech I concluded with these words and I would like to conclude with the same words because it is still the case: this honour is afforded to so few of us and we should never take it for granted. In conclusion, I would like to thank the people of the Nanango electorate for giving me the honour of being their representative in parliament. For those who have voted for me, I hope my efforts over the next years will reward your faith. For those who chose otherwise, I will be working hard to earn your support. In either case, I am here to serve you.