




Speech By  
**Hon. Leanne Linard**

**MEMBER FOR NUDGEES**

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Record of Proceedings, 28 October 2021

**ADDRESS-IN-REPLY**

 **Hon. LM LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (12.26 pm): It is a great privilege to rise in this House once again as the member for Nudgee. Securing the support of my community for a third term in this place is no less an honour than on the first day I walked in here. In fact, I believe that honour increases each and every election that my community renew their faith in me to protect and represent their interests in this place.

The 2020 state election was the fourth time I have contested the seat of Nudgee. Losing my first election in 2012 engendered a hunger in me even greater than was the case in that year to return in 2015, 2017 and again in 2020 to give my community the ongoing strong voice and advocacy that it deserves. Losing my first election also taught me a very important lesson that is always front of mind: no-one owns these positions and no-one owns these seats; we are mere caretakers and we must hold them lightly because our time in this place is limited—it is privileged but it is limited—and the Queensland community will always be the master of our time here. I would like to begin where I intend to end, and that is by thanking the electors of Nudgee for the faith they have shown in me to continue to serve and represent their interests in this place.

I am a third generation Nudgee local and I love my community. It has been good to me. It has been good to my family and it is where I am watching my two young boys grow up and put down their roots. It is a place where I feel deep connection—from Boondall in the north, where my son is at college; to Banyo, where my youngest is starting his education and I completed mine; to Nundah, where my husband coaches the local footy team; to Virginia, where I went to primary school; to Toombul, where I started my first part-time job; to Northgate, where I started my first full-time job; and to Zillmere, where my son will start his basketball journey soon at the very best local club, the Wizards. As I said, my electorate is a place where I feel deep connection and I take great pride in the people, community groups and institutions that form it.

Equally, I respectfully acknowledge the Turrbal and Jagera people, the traditional owners of the land on which I serve. I grew up on Ngunnawal, Larakia and Turrbal country, and I am raising my family on and serving the people of Nudgee on Turrbal land. It is a privilege.

I would like to thank our Premier, Annastacia Palaszczuk, and acknowledge that it is in such large part her humility, consultative approach to leadership and clear dedication to and love of Queensland and Queenslanders that has afforded me the opportunity to once again take my seat on this side of the chamber. I also offer my belated congratulations to all members across this House on their election to this honourable place, particularly the new members. To serve your electorate is a great honour. To serve the electorate of Queensland is equally a great honour. I thank my caucus colleagues sincerely for the opportunity they have afforded me this term to serve in both.

I particularly congratulate those members elected for the first time. It is always a special experience to listen to maiden speeches and to gain a small window into what has brought people to this place. The speeches delivered by new members on both sides of the House have not disappointed.

While congratulating the new, I also take a moment to remember those who are no longer in this place. This is a transient place, particularly so in more recent times, we all know that. It is also a place where friendships form and people on both sides are missed. I particularly mention my long-term friend and colleague Kate Jones in this respect and wish her and her lovely family every happiness in this next chapter of their life.

None of us come to this place by our singular effort. It takes a team, a community. Before turning to the term and challenges ahead, I would like to take this opportunity to now thank mine. First and foremost, I thank my family. My husband, Ian, has been my greatest supporter and confidant for the past 22 years and along with my two gorgeous boys, Jordan and Ollie, is my greatest joy and solace. I learnt early in life growing up on RAAF bases as the daughter of a pilot and engineer that service brings sacrifice and that that sacrifice is often borne disproportionately by the families of those who serve. Political service is the same. Political service is public service. I believe deeply that public service is honourable, but it comes at a cost. I thank my family for the privacy and quality time that they sacrifice so that I may serve in this place.

I thank my amazing campaign team, once again led by my dear friend and mentor of 20 years—himself a former long-term minister and member for Nudgee in this place—Neil Roberts. Neil, along with his wife, Jenny, took me under their wing when my parents died and they have not been able to get rid of me since. I thank them for their abiding friendship, encouragement and for accepting my boys as their own.

To my campaign manager, Stacey; volunteer coordinator, Emily; sign site and equipment coordinator, Graham; and Banyo-Northgate stalwart, Reg Neil: thank you for the countless hours you dedicated to my campaign and for your friendship. I could never have covered as much ground and done so with such a large volunteer base if not for you. Thank you to my communications team, Jill, Kim and Walter; my fundraising manager, Veronica; and Margaret and Bruce who letterboxed my entire electorate and when finished would start again. Thank you to my branch coordinators, Christoff, Luke and Katie, and all of my incredibly hardworking branch and community volunteers who stood out in the heat and rain at markets, street corners, pre-poll and election day, knocked on doors and letterboxed the electorate over and over and made phone calls with me. Thank you for your dedication to the movement we serve, to our local community and to the greatest tradition of volunteering. I will endeavour to continue to serve you and our community well.

Thank you to Neil Henderson and the Services Union who have been alongside me since the day I first sought candidacy in 2012. I also extend my sincere appreciation to the United Workers Union for their support.

A special thank you goes to my electorate office team—Natacha, Jill, Julz and Jemma—who worked tirelessly for the people of Nudgee last term. I wish both Natacha and Julz every success as they move onto other career aspirations, and I welcome Julie back into the Nudgee fold. I know that, along with Jill and Jemma, you will serve the electorate well. Last but not least, I say thank you to Michael for taking a month off work this election, like the ones before it, just to be there and do whatever needed to be done.

While much has been achieved, as I look at the term ahead I see much still to be delivered for my electorate. Election and budget commitments this term will deliver: new stop, drop and go facilities at Northgate and Boondall state schools to improve student safety; \$500,000 to expand and improve facilities at the after-school care at Boondall State School; \$150,000 to build a prep playground at Virginia State School; \$300,000 to complete a new music and arts studio at Nundah State School; \$300,000 to upgrade the administration building at Northgate State School; \$100,000 to resurface and irrigate the fields at Kedron AFL club; an accessibility upgrade at Banyo train station; a park-and-ride study at Northgate train station; and a transport planning study at Boondall train station. These projects will deliver meaningful improvements to students, commuters and my community. I particularly thank ministers Grace Grace and Mark Bailey and the Treasurer for funding these worthwhile initiatives.

In addition to the commitments just mentioned that have received funding, there are many others that I continue to advocate for, including: funding for appropriate female change facilities at Zillmere Eagles and Mayne Tigers; upgrades to the changing rooms at the Earnshaw State College pool; improved traffic management in the Nudgee environmental centre precinct; upgrades to the Nundah train station; and a commitment from the Brisbane City Council to partner with us and the \$200,000 we have on the table to deliver a Banyo level crossing precinct study. In this regard, I continue to hold out hope that the Brisbane City Council and the local LNP councillor for Northgate will finally come to the table and start genuine and constructive dialogue on how we can work together to improve road safety at the Banyo road and rail crossing. While it may not be a priority of theirs, it is absolutely a priority of my community and therefore a priority of mine.

I move from electorate priorities to ministerial priorities. It is indeed a privilege to have the opportunity to serve this term not only as the member for Nudgee but also as the Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs. I once again thank my caucus and cabinet colleagues sincerely for their support and for this opportunity. I acknowledge the leadership of ministers Di Farmer, Shannon Fentiman, Grace Grace and Stirling Hinchliffe who preceded me in my portfolio responsibilities.

I would like to acknowledge the dedication and passion of our frontline child safety officers and support staff, foster carers, kinship carers, youth justice workers, our partners in the non-government sector and all within my department who support their work. Many dedicate their professional lives to working with vulnerable children and youth and do so quietly and respectfully inside people's homes and behind the challenging walls of youth detention. Travelling across Queensland and meeting with and listening to these frontline workers in child safety and youth justice, listening to the thoughts and concerns of children in care and young people in detention, of foster carers, kinship carers, parents of those in care and those who have exited the system, is without doubt the greatest and most meaningful part of my role. It is also tremendously challenging.

With over 93,000 children across Queensland known to Child Safety each year—almost 11,000 in care—there is always more work to be done to improve the system. With one report made every four minutes to my department and three out of every four households we work with experiencing domestic and family violence, drug and alcohol abuse, mental health issues, criminal histories or other key risk factors—all of which have a profound impact on children—there is more work to be done. With roughly 280 young people in detention and many more on orders at any given time, there is always more work to do when public safety is paramount and community confidence essential.

The tragic, complex and difficult nature of the work of my department provides no shortage of material to politicise for those who would seek to do so. As I have said before, no amount of politics in here will change the life of a child or improve community safety out there. My focus remains resolutely on the work and the ongoing reform needed to continue to improve the child protection and youth justice systems.

As Minister for Multicultural Affairs, I look forward in the term ahead to continuing to meet with and give a voice to the tremendous diversity of cultures and traditions that form our great state. We are made stronger by our diversity. A united and inclusive Queensland must be something we all strive for. Racism and discrimination must always be called out because both, while sometimes hidden, continue to exist and we are the poorer for it. I firmly believe that when we move as a community from tolerance of diversity and even from acceptance of diversity to celebration of diversity it is then that we truly harness the opportunity that comes from difference.

In conclusion, I would like to end where I began. That is by thanking the electors of Nudgee for the faith they have instilled in me to continue to serve and represent their interests in this place. I will do so to the best of my ability always, as I will also do for the children, youth and families in contact with my portfolio. As I never finish a speech in the address-in-reply without an RFK quote, I leave members with this one—

All of us might wish at times that we lived in a more tranquil world, but we don't. And if our times are difficult and perplexing, so are they challenging and filled with opportunity.

To the term ahead.